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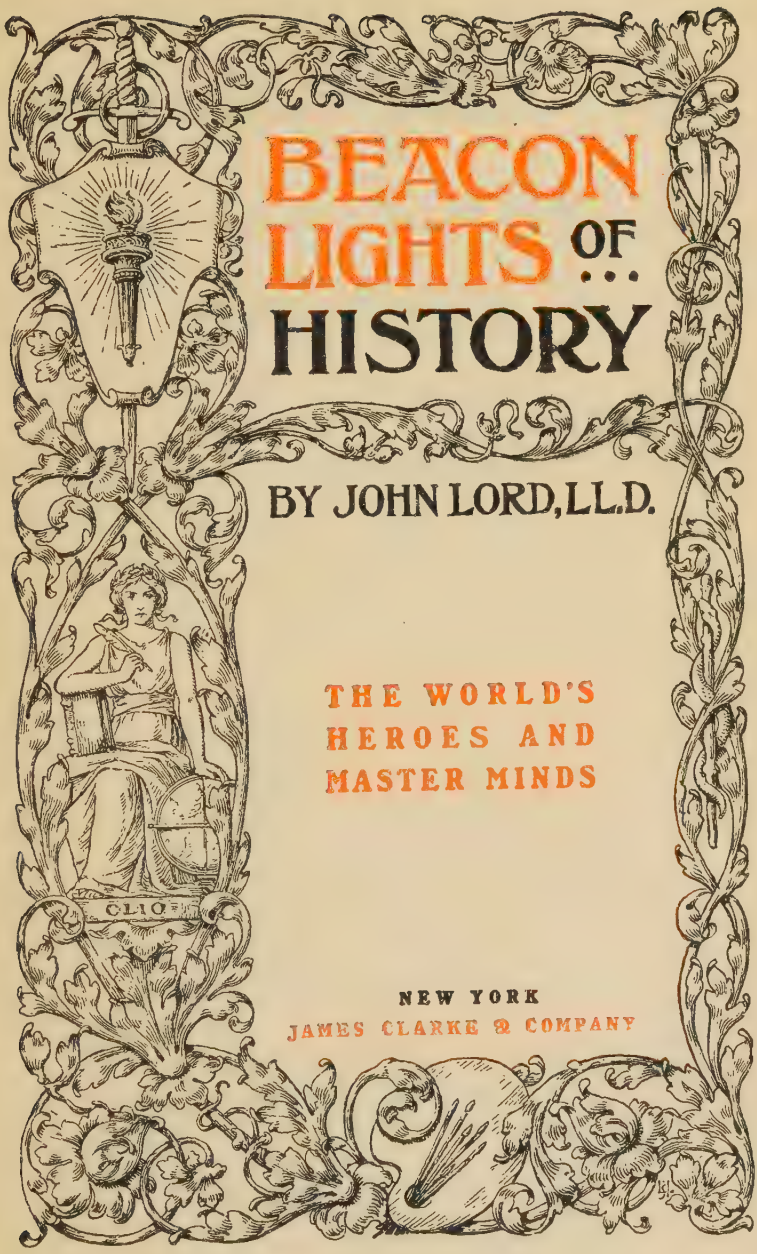
BEACON LIGHTS OF HISTORY

BY JOHN LORD, LL.D.

THE WORLD'S HEROES AND MASTER MINDS



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BEACON LIGHTS OF HISTORY.

By JOHN LORD, LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF "THE OLD ROMAN WORLD," "MODERN EUROPE," ETC., ETC.

VOLUME VIII.

GREAT RULERS.

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VOL. VIII.

GREAT RULERS.

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ALFRED THE GREAT.

A. D. 849–901.

THE SAXONS IN ENGLAND.

BEACON LIGHTS OF HISTORY.

ALFRED THE GREAT.

THE SAXONS IN ENGLAND.

ALFRED is one of the most interesting characters in all history for those blended virtues and talents which remind us of a David, a Marcus Aurelius, or a Saint Louis,—a man whom everybody loved, whose deeds were a boon, whose graces were a radiance, and whose words were a benediction; alike a saint, a poet, a warrior, and a statesman. He ruled a little kingdom, but left a great name, second only to Charlemagne, among the civilizers of his people and nation in the Middle Ages. As a man of military genius he yields to many of the kings of England, to say nothing of the heroes of ancient and modern times.

When he was born, A. D. 849, the Saxons had occupied Britain, or England, about four hundred years, having conquered it from the old Celtic inhabitants soon after the Romans had retired to defend their own imperial capital from the Goths. Like the Goths, Vandals, Franks. Burgundians, Lombards, and Heruli, the

Saxons belonged to the same Teutonic race, whose remotest origin can be traced to Central Asia, — kindred, indeed, to the early inhabitants of Italy and Greece, whom we call Indo-European, or Aryan. These Saxons — one of the fiercest tribes of the Teutonic barbarians — lived, before the invasion of Britain, in that part of Europe which we now call Schleswig, in the heart of the peninsula which parts the Baltic from the northern seas; also in those parts of Germany which now belong to Hanover and Oldenburg. It does not appear from the best authorities that these tribes — called Engle, Saxon, and Jute — wandered about seeking a precarious living, but they were settled in villages, in the government of which we trace the germs of the subsequent social and political institutions of England. The social centre was the homestead of the *æthéling* or *eorl*, distinguished from his fellow-villagers by his greater wealth and nobler blood, and held by them in hereditary reverence. From him and his brother-æthelings the leaders of a warlike expedition were chosen. He alone was armed with spear and sword, and his long hair floated in the wind. He was bound to protect his kinsmen from wrong and injustice. The land which inclosed the village, whether reserved for pasture, wood, or tillage, was undivided, and every free villager had the right of turning his cattle and swine upon it, and also of sharing in the division of the harvest. The

After the painting by H. Mertê

EMBARKATION OF ANGLO SAXONS FOR THE CONQUEST OF ENGLAND

basis of the life was agricultural. Our Saxon ancestors in Germany did not subsist exclusively by hunting or fishing, although these pursuits were not neglected. They were as skilful with the plough and mattock as they were in steering a boat or hunting a deer or pursuing a whale. They were coarse in their pleasures, but religious in their turn of mind; Pagans, indeed, but worshipping the powers of Nature with poetic ardor. They were born warriors, and their passion for the sea led to adventurous enterprise. Before the close of the third century their boats, driven by fifty oars, had been seen in the British waters; and after the Romans had left the Britons to defend themselves against the Scots and Picts, the harassed rulers of the land invoked the aid of these Saxon pirates, and, headed by two ealdormen, — Hengist and Horsa, — they landed on the Isle of Thanet in the year 449.

These two chieftains are the earliest traditionary heroes of the Saxons in England. Their mercenary work was soon done, and after it was done they had no idea of retiring to their own villages in Germany. They cast their greedy eyes on richer pastures and more fruitful fields. Brother-pirates flocked from the Elbe and Rhine to their settlement in Thanet. In forty-five years after Hengist and Horsa landed, Cerdic with a more formidable band had taken possession of a large part of the southern coast, and pushed his way to

Winchester and founded the kingdom of Wessex. But the work of conquest was slow. It took seventy years for the Saxons to become masters of Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Essex, and Wessex.

A stout resistance to the invading Saxons had been made by the native Britons, headed by Arthur, — a legendary hero, who is thought to have lived near the close of the fifth century. His deeds and those of the knights of the Round Table form the subject of one of the most interesting romances of the Middle Ages, probably written in the brightest age of chivalry, and by a monk very ignorant of history, since he gives many Norman names to his characters. But all the valor of the Celtic hero and his chivalrous followers was of no avail before the fierce and persistent attacks of a hardier race, bent on the possession of a fairer land than their own.

We know but little of the details of the various conflicts until Britain was finally won by these predatory tribes of barbarians. The stubborn resistance of the Britons led to their final retreat or complete extermination, and with their disappearance also perished what remained of the Roman civilization. The resistance of the Britons was much more obstinate than that of any of the other provinces of the Empire; but, as the forces arrayed against them were comparatively small, the work of conquest was slow. "It took thirty years to win

Kent alone, and sixty to complete the conquest of south Britain, and nearly two hundred to subdue the whole island." But when the conquest was made it was complete, and England was Saxon, in language, in institutions, and in manners; while France retained much of the language, habits, and institutions of the Romans, and even of the old Gaulish elements of society. England became a German nation on the complete wreck of everything Roman, whose peculiar characteristic was the freedom of those who tilled the land or gathered around the military standard of their chieftains. It was the gradual transfer of a whole German nation from the Elbe and Rhine to the Thames and the Humber, with their original village institutions, under the rule of their *eorls*, with the simple addition of kings,—unknown in their original settlements, but brought about by the necessities which military life and conquest produced.

After the conquest we find seven petty kings, who ruled in different parts of the island. Jealousies, wars, and marriages soon reduced their number to three, ruling over Wessex, Mercia, and Northumbria. All the people of these kingdoms were Pagan, the chief deity of whom was Woden. It was not till the middle of the seventh century that Christianity was introduced into Wessex, although Kent and Northumbria received Christian missionaries half-a-century earlier. The beau-

tiful though well-known tradition of the incidents which led to the introduction of the Christian religion deserves a passing mention. About the middle of the sixth century some Saxons taken in war, in one of the quarrels of rival kings, and hence made slaves, were exposed for sale in Rome. Gregory the Great, then simply deacon, passing by the market-place, observed their fair faces, white bodies, blue eyes, and golden hair, and inquired of the slave-dealer who they were. "They are English, or Angles." "No, not Angles," said the pious and poetic deacon; "they are angels, with faces so angelic. From what country did they come?" "From Deira." "*De Ira!* ay, plucked from God's wrath. What is the name of their king?" "Ella." "Ay, let alleluia be sung in their land." It need scarcely be added that when this pious and witty deacon became pope he remembered these Saxon slaves, and sent Augustin (or Austin, — not to be confounded with Augustine of Hippo, who lived nearly two centuries earlier), with forty monks as missionaries to convert the pagan Saxons. They established themselves in Kent A. D. 597, which became the seat of the first English bishopric, through the favor of the king, Æthelbert, whose wife Clotilda, a French princess, had been previously converted. Soon after, Essex followed the example of Kent; and then Northumbria. Wessex was the last of the Saxon kingdoms to be converted, their inhabitants being especially fierce and warlike.

It is singular that no traces of Christianity seem to have been left in Britain on the completion of the Saxon conquest, although it had been planted there as early as the time of Constantine. Helena was a Christian, and Pelagius and Celestine were British monks. But the Saxon conquest eradicated all that was left of Roman influence and institutions.

When Christianity had once acquired a foothold among the Saxons its progress was rapid. In no country were monastic institutions more firmly planted. Monasteries and churches were erected in the principal settlements and liberally endowed by the Saxon kings. In Kent were the great sees of Canterbury and Rochester; in Essex was London; in East Anglia was Norwich; in Wessex was Winchester; in Mercia were Lichfield, Leicester, Worcester, and Hereford; in Northumbria were York, Durham, and Ripon. Each cathedral had its schools and convents. Christianity became the law of the land, and entered largely into all the Saxon codes. There was a constant immigration of missionaries into Britain, and the great sees were filled with distinguished ecclesiastics, frequently from the continent, since a strong union was cemented between Rome and the English churches. Prince and prelate made frequent pilgrimages to the old capital of the world, and were received with distinguished honors. The monasteries were filled with princes and nobles and ladies of rank. As early

as the eighth century monasteries were enormously multiplied and enriched, for the piety of the Saxons assumed a monastic type. What civilization existed can be traced chiefly to the Church.

We read of only three great names among the Saxons who impressed their genius on the nation, until the various Saxon kingdoms were united under the sovereignty of Ecgberht, or Egbert, king of Wessex, about the middle of the ninth century. These were Theodore, Caedmon, and Bæda. The first was a monk from Tarsus, whom the Pope dispatched in the year 668 to Britain as Archbishop of Canterbury. To him the work of church organization was intrusted. He enlarged the number of the sees, and arranged them on the basis which was maintained for a thousand years. The subordination of priest to bishop and bishop to primate was more clearly defined by him. He also assembled councils for general legislation, which perhaps led the way to national parliaments. He not only organized the episcopate, but the parish system, and even the system of tithes has been by some attributed to him. The missionary who had been merely the chaplain of a nobleman became the priest of the manor or parish.

The second memorable man was born a cowherd; encouraged to sing his songs by the abbess Hilda, a "Northumbrian Deborah." When advanced in life he entered through her patronage a convent, and sang the

marvellous and touching stories of the Hebrew Scriptures, fixing their truths on the mind of the nation, and becoming the father of English poetry.

The third of these great men was the greatest, Bæda, — or Bede, as the name is usually spelled. He was a priest of the great abbey church of Weremouth, in Northumbria, and was a master of all the learning then known. He was the life of the famous school of Jarrow, and it is said that six hundred monks, besides strangers, listened to his teachings. His greatest work was an "Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation," which extends from the landing of Julius Cæsar to the year 731. He was the first English historian, and the founder of mediæval history, and all we know of the one hundred and fifty years after the landing of Augustin the missionary is drawn from him. He was not only historian, but theologian, — the father of the education of the English nation.

It was one hundred and fourteen years after the death of the "venerable Bede" before Alfred was born, A. D. 849, the youngest son of Æthelwulf, king of Wessex, who united under his rule all the Saxon kingdoms. The mother of Alfred was Osburgha, a German princess of extraordinary force of character. From her he received, at the age of four, the first rudiments of education, and learned to sing those Saxon ballads which he

afterwards recited with so much effect in the Danish camp. At the age of five Alfred was sent to Rome, probably to be educated, where he remained two years, visiting on his return the court of Charles the Bald, — the centre of culture in Western Europe. The celebrated Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, — the greatest churchman of the age, — was the most influential minister of the king; at whose table also sat John Erigena, then engaged in a controversy with Gotteschalk, the German monk, about the presence of Christ in the eucharist, — the earliest notable theological controversy after the Patristic age. Alfred was too young to take an interest in this profound discussion; but he may perhaps have received an intellectual impulse from his visit to Rome and Paris, which affected his whole subsequent life.

About this time his father, over sixty years of age, married a French princess of the name of Judith, only fourteen years of age, — even in that rude age a great scandal, which nearly resulted in his dethronement. He lived but two years longer; and his youthful widow, to the still greater scandal of the realm and Church, married her late husband's eldest son, Ethelbald, who inherited the crown. It was through this woman, and her subsequent husband Baldwin, called *Bras de Fer*, Count of Flanders, that the English kings, since the Conqueror, trace their descent from Alfred and Charle-

magne; for her son, the second Count of Flanders, married Elfrida, the daughter of Alfred. From this union descended the Conqueror's wife Matilda. Thus the present royal family of England can trace a direct descent through William the Conqueror, Alfred, and Charlemagne, and is allied by blood, remotely indeed, with most of the reigning princes of Europe.

The three elder brothers of Alfred reigned successively over Wessex, — to whom all England owned allegiance. It was during their short reigns that the great invasion of the Danes took place, which reduced the whole island to desolation and misery. These Danes were of the same stock as the Saxons, but more enterprising and bold. It seems that they drove the Saxons before them, as the Saxons, three hundred years before, had driven the Britons. In their destructive ravages they sacked and burned Croyland, Peterborough, Huntington, Ely, and other wealthy abbeys, — the glory of the kingdom, — together with their valuable libraries.

It was then that Alfred (already the king's most capable general) began his reign, A. D. 871, at the age of twenty-three, on the death of his brother Ethelred, — a brave and pious prince, mortally wounded at the battle of Merton.

It was Alfred's memorable struggle with the Danes which gave to him his military fame. When he ascended

the throne these barbarians had gained a foothold, and in a few years nearly the whole of England was in their hands. Wave followed wave in the dreadful invasion; fleet after fleet and army after army was destroyed, and the Saxons were driven nearly to despair; for added to the evils of pillage and destruction were pestilence and famine, the usual attendants of desolating wars. In the year 878 the heroic leader of the disheartened people was compelled to hide himself, with a few faithful followers, in the forest of Selwood, amid the marshes of Somersetshire. Yet Alfred — a fugitive — succeeded at last in rescuing his kingdom of Wessex from the dominion of Pagan barbarians, and restoring it to a higher state of prosperity than it had ever attained before. He preserved both Christianity and civilization. For these exalted services he is called "the Great;" and no prince ever more heroically earned the title.

"It is hard," says Hughes, who has written an interesting but not exhaustive life of Alfred, "to account for the sudden and complete collapse of the West Saxon power in January, 878, since in the campaign of the preceding year Alfred had been successful both by sea and land." Yet such seems to have been the fact, whatever may be its explanation. No such panic had ever overcome the Britons, who made a more stubborn resistance. No prince ever suffered a severer humiliation than did the Saxon monarch during the dreary winter of

878; but, according to Asser, it was for his ultimate good. Alfred was deeply and sincerely religious, and like David saw the hand of God in all his misfortunes. In his case adversity proved the school of greatness. For six months he was hidden from public view, lost sight of entirely by his afflicted subjects, enduring great privations, and gaining a scanty subsistence. There are several popular legends about his life in the marshes, too well known to be described, — one about the cakes and another about his wanderings to the Danish camp disguised as a minstrel, both probable enough; yet, if true, they show an extraordinary depth of misfortunes.

At last his subjects began to rally. It was known by many that Alfred was alive. Bodies of armed followers gradually gathered at his retreat. He was strongly intrenched; and occasionally he issued from his retreat to attack straggling bands, or to make reconnoissance of the enemy's forces. In May, 878, he left his fortified position and met some brave and faithful subjects at Egbert's Stone, twenty miles to the east of Selwood. The gathering had been carefully planned and secretly made, and was unknown to the Danes. His first marked success was at Edington, or Ethandune, where the Pagan host lay encamped, near Westbury. We have no definite knowledge of the number of men engaged in that bloody and desperate battle, in which the Saxons

were greatly outnumbered by the Danes, who were marshalled under a chieftain called Guthrun. But the battle was decisive, and made Alfred once more master of England south of the Thames. Guthrun, now in Alfred's power, was the ablest warrior that the Northmen had as yet produced. He was shut up in an inland fort, with no ships on the nearest river, and with no hope of reinforcements. At the end of two weeks he humbly sued for peace, offering to quit Wessex for good, and even to embrace the Christian religion. Strange as it may seem, Alfred granted his request, — either, with profound statesmanship, not wishing to drive a desperate enemy to extremities, or seeking his conversion. The remains of the discomfited Pagan host crossed over into Mercia, and gave no further trouble. Never was a conquest attended with happier results. Guthrun (with thirty of his principal nobles) was baptized into the Christian faith, and received the Saxon name of Athelstan. But East Anglia became a Danish kingdom. The Danes were not expelled from England. Their settlement was permanent. The treaty of Wedmore confirmed them in their possessions. Alfred by this treaty was acknowledged as undisputed master of England south of the Thames; of Wessex and Essex, including London, Hertford, and St. Albans; of the whole of Mercia west of Watling Street, — the great road from London to Chester; but

the Danes retained also one half of England, which shows how formidable they were, even in defeat. The Danes and the Saxons, it would seem, commingled, and gradually became one nation.

The great Danish invasion of the ninth century was successful, since it gave half of England to the Pagans. It is a sad thing to contemplate. Civilization was doubtless retarded. Whole districts were depopulated, and monasteries and churches were ruthlessly destroyed, with their libraries and works of art. This could not have happened without a fearful demoralization among the Saxons themselves. They had become prosperous, and their wealth was succeeded by vices, especially luxury and sloth. Their wealth tempted the more needy of the adventurers from the North, who succeeded in their aggressions because they were stronger than the Saxons. So slow was the progress of England in civilization. As soon as it became centralized under a single monarch, it was subjected to fresh calamities. It would seem that the history of those ages is simply the history of violence and spoliations. There was the perpetual waste of human energies. Barbarism seemed to be stronger than civilization. Nor in this respect was the condition of England unique. The same public misfortunes happened in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. For five hundred years Europe was the scene of constant strife. Not until the Normans

settled in England were the waves of barbaric invasion arrested.

The Danish conquest made a profound impression on Alfred, and stimulated him to renewed efforts to preserve what still remained of Christian civilization. His whole subsequent life was spent in actual war with the Northmen, or in preparations for war. It was remarkable that he succeeded as well as he did, for after all he was the sovereign of scarcely half the territory that Egbert had won, and over which his grandfather and father had ruled. He preserved Wessex; and in preserving Wessex he saved England, which would have been replunged in barbarism but for his perseverance, energy, and courage. That Danish invasion was a chastisement not undeserved, for both the clergy and the laity had become corrupt, had been enervated by prosperity. The clergy especially were lazy and ignorant; not one in a thousand could write a common letter of salutation. They had fattened on the contributions of princes and of the credulous people; they saw the destruction of their richest and proudest abbeys, and their lands seized by Pagan barbarians, who settled down in them as lords of the soil, especially in Northumbria. But Alfred at least arrested their further progress, and threw them on the defensive. He knew that the recovery of the conquests which the Saxons had made was a work of exceeding difficulty.

It was necessary to make great preparations for future struggles, as peace with the Danes was only a truce. They aimed at the complete conquest of the island, and they sought to rouse the hostility of the Welsh.

Alfred showed a wise precaution against future assaults in constructing fortresses at the most important points within his control. Before his day the Saxons had but few fortified positions, and this want of forts had greatly facilitated the Danish conquest. But the Danes, as soon as they gained a strong position, fortified it, and were never afterwards ejected by force. Probably Alfred took the hint from them. He rebuilt and strengthened the fortresses along the coast, as he had four precious years of unmolested work; and for this his small kingdom was doubtless severely taxed. He imported skilled workmen, and adopted the newest improvements. He made use of stone instead of timber, and extended his works of construction to palaces, halls, and churches, as well as castles. So well built were his fortifications, that no strong place was ever afterwards wrested from him. In those times the defence of kingdoms was in castles. They marked the feudal ages equally with monasteries and cathedral churches. Castles protected the realm from invasion and conquest, as much as they did the family of a feudal noble. The wisdom as well as the necessity of fortified cities was seen in a marked manner when the Northmen, in 885,

stole up the Thames and Medway and made an unexpected assault on Rochester. They were completely foiled, and were obliged to retreat to their ships, leaving behind them even the spoil they had brought from France. This successful resistance was a great moral assistance to Alfred, since it opened the eyes of bishops and nobles to the necessity of fortifying their towns, to which they had hitherto been opposed, being unwilling to incur the expense. So it was not long before Alfred had a complete chain of defences on the coast, as well as around his cities and palaces, able to resist sudden attacks,—which he had most to fear. His great work of fortification was that of London, which, though belonging to him by the peace of Wedmore, was neglected, fallen to decay, filled with lawless bands of marauders and pirates, and defenceless against attack. In 886 he marched against this city, which made no serious resistance; rebuilt it, made it habitable, fortified it, and encouraged people to settle in it, for he foresaw its vast commercial importance. Under the rule of his son Ethelred, it regained the pre-eminence it had enjoyed under the Romans as a commercial centre.

Having done what he could to protect his dominion from sudden attacks, Alfred then turned his attention to the reorganization of his army and navy. Strictly speaking he had no regular army, or standing force, which he could call his own. When the country

was threatened the freemen flew to arms, under their eorls and ealdormen; and on this force the king was obliged to rely. They sometimes acted without his orders, obeying the calls of their leaders when danger was most imminent. On the men in the immediate neighborhood of danger the brunt of the contest fell. Nor could levies be relied upon for any length of time; they dwindled after a few weeks, in order to attend to their agricultural interests, for agriculture was the only great and permanent pursuit in the feudal ages. Everything was subordinate to labors in the field. The only wealth was in land, except what was hoarded by the clergy and nobles.

How well Alfred paid his soldiers it is difficult to determine. His own private means were large, and the Crown lands were very extensive. One-third of his income was spent upon his army. But it is not probable that a large force was under pay in time of peace; yet he had always one third of his forces ready to act promptly against an enemy. The burden of the service was distributed over the whole kingdom. The main feature of his military reform seems to have been in the division of his forces into three bodies, only one of which was liable to be called upon for service at a time, except in great emergencies. In regard to tactics, or changes in armor and mode of fighting, we know nothing; for war as an art or science did not exist in any

Teutonic kingdom; it was lost with the fall of the Roman Empire. How far Alfred was gifted with military genius we are unable to say, beyond courage, fertility of resources, activity of movement, and a marvellous patience. His greatest qualities were moral, like those of Washington. It is his reproachless character, and his devotion to duty, and love of his people which impress us from first to last. As has been said of Marcus Aurelius, Alfred was a Saint Anselm on a throne. He had none of those turbulent and restless qualities which we associate with mediæval kings. What a contrast between him and William the Conqueror!

Alfred also gave his attention to the construction of a navy, as well as to the organization of an army, knowing that it was necessary to resist the Northmen on the ocean and prevent their landing on the coast. In 875 he had fought a naval battle with success, and had taken one of the ships of the sea-kings, which furnished him with a model to build his own ships, — doing the same thing that the Romans did in their early naval warfare with the Carthaginians. In 877 he destroyed a Danish fleet on its way to relieve Exeter. But he soon made considerable improvement on the ships of his enemies, making them twice as long as those of the Danes, with a larger number of oars. These were steadier and swifter than the older vessels. As the West Saxons were not a seafaring people, he em-

ployed and munificently rewarded men from other nations more accustomed to the sea, — whether Frisians, Franks, Britons, Scots, or even Danes. The result was, he was never badly beaten at sea, and before the end of his reign he had swept the coast clear of pirates. Within two years from the treaty of Wedmore his fleet was ready for action. He was prepared to meet the sea-kings on equal terms, and in 882 he had gained an important naval battle over a fleet that was meditating an invasion.

In the year 885 the Danes again invaded England and laid siege to Rochester, but fled to their ships on the approach of Alfred. They were pursued by the Saxon king and defeated with great slaughter, sixteen Danish vessels being destroyed and their crews put to the sword. Nor had Guthrun Athelstan, the ex-viking, been true to his engagements. He had allowed two additional settlements of Danes on the East Anglian coasts, and had even assisted Alfred's enemies. Their defeat, however, induced him to live peaceably in East Anglia until he died in 890. These successes of Alfred secured peace with the Danes for eight more years, during which he pursued his various schemes for the improvement of his people, and in preparations for future wars. He had put his kingdom in a state of defence, and now turned his attention to legislation, — the supremest labor of an enlightened monarch.

The laws of Alfred wear a close resemblance to those which Moses gave to the Hebrews, and moreover are pervaded with Christian ideas. His aim seems to have been to recognize in his jurisprudence the supreme obedience which is due to the laws of God. In all the laws of the converted Teutonic nations, from Charlemagne down, we notice the influence of the Christian clergy in modifying the severity of the old Pagan codes. Alfred did not aim to be an original legislator, like Moses or Solon, but selected from the Mosaic code, and also from the laws of Ethelbert, Ina, Offa, and other Saxon princes, those regulations which he considered best adapted to the circumstances of the people whom he governed. He recognized more completely than any of his predecessors the rights of property, and attached great sanctity to oaths. Whoever violated his pledge was sentenced to imprisonment. He raised the dignity of ealdormen and bishops to that of the highest rank. He made treason against the royal authority the gravest offence known to the laws, and all were deemed traitors who should presume to draw the sword in the king's house. He made new provisions for personal security, and severely punished theft and robbery of every kind, especially of the property of the Church. He bestowed freedom on slaves after six years of service. Some think he instituted trial by jury. Like Theodosius and Charlemagne, he gave peculiar privi-

leges to the clergy as a counterpoise to the lawlessness of nobles.

One of the peculiarities of his legislation was compensation for crime, — seen alike in the Mosaic dispensation and in the old customs of the Germanic nations in their native forests. On conviction, the culprit was compelled to pay a sum of money to the relatives of the injured, and another sum to the community at large. This compensation varied according to the rank of the injured party, — and rank was determined by wealth. The owner of two hydes of land was ranked above a ceorl, or simple farmer, while the owner of twelve hydes was a royal thane. In the compensation for crime the gradation was curious: twelve shillings would pay for the loss of a foot, ten for a great toe, and twenty for a thumb. If a man robbed his equal, he was compelled to pay threefold; if he robbed the king, he paid ninefold; and if he robbed the church, he was obliged to return twelvefold: hence the robbery of ecclesiastical property was attended with such severe penalties that it was unusual. In some cases theft was punished with death.

The code of Alfred was severe, but in an age of crime and disorder severity was necessary. He also instituted a vigorous police, and divided the country into counties, and these again into hundreds or parishes, each of which was made responsible for the mainte-

nance of order and the detection of crime. He was severe on judges when they passed sentence irrespective of the rights of jurors. He did not emancipate slaves, but he ameliorated their condition and limited their term of compulsory service. Burglary in the king's house was punished by a fine of one hundred and twenty shillings; in an archbishop's, at ninety; in a bishop's or ealdorman's, at sixty; in the house of a man of twelve hydes, at thirty shillings; in a six-hyde man's, at fifteen; in a churl's, at five shillings, — the fine being graded according to the rank of him whose house had been entered. There was a rigorous punishment for working on Sunday: if a theow, by order of his lord, the lord had to pay a penalty of thirty shillings; if without the lord's order, he was condemned to be flogged. If a freeman worked without his lord's order, he had to pay sixty shillings or forfeit his freedom. If a man was found burning a tree in a forest, he was obliged to pay a fine of sixty shillings, in order to protect the forest; or if he cut down a tree under which thirty swine might stand, he was obliged to pay a fine of sixty shillings. These penalties seem severe, but they were inflicted for offences difficult to be detected and frequently committed. We infer from these various fines that burglary, robbery, petty larcenies, and brawls were the most common offences against the laws.

One of the greatest services which Alfred rendered to the cause of civilization in England was in separating judicial from executive functions. The old eorls and ealdormen were warriors; and yet to them had been committed the administration of justice, which they often abused, — frequently deciding cases against the verdicts of jurors, and sometimes unjustly dooming innocent men to capital punishment. Alfred hanged an ealdorman or alderman, one Freberne, for sentencing Haspin to death when the jury was in doubt. He even hanged twenty-four inferior officers, on whom judicial duties devolved, for palpable injustice.

The love of justice and truth was one of the main traits of Alfred's character, and he painfully perceived that the ealdormen of shires, though faithful and valiant warriors, were not learned and impartial enough to administer justice. There was scarcely one of them who could read the written law, or who had any extensive acquaintance with the common law or the usages which had been in force from time immemorial, — as far back as in the original villages of Germany. Moreover, the poor and defenceless had need of protection. They always had needed it, for in Pagan and barbarous countries their rights were too often disregarded. When brute force bore everything before it, it became both the duty and privilege of the king, who represented central power, to maintain the rights of the humblest

of his people, — to whom he was a father. To see justice enforced is the most exalted of the prerogatives of sovereigns; and no one appreciated this delegation of sovereign power from the Universal Father more than Alfred, the most conscientious and truth-loving of all the kings of the Middle Ages.

So, to maintain justice, Alfred set aside the ignorant and passionate ealdormen, and appointed judges whose sole duty it was to interpret and enforce the laws, and men best fitted to represent the king in the royal courts. They were sent through the shires to see that justice was done, and to report the decisions of the county courts. Thus came into existence the judges of assize, — an office or institution which remains to this day, amid all the revolutions of English thought and life, and all the changes which politics and dynasties have wrought.

Nor did Alfred rest with a reform of the law courts. He defined the boundaries of shires, which divisions are very old, and subdivided them into parishes, which have remained to this day. He gave to each hundred its court, from which appeals were made to a court representing several hundreds, — about three to each county. Each hundred was subdivided into tythings, or companies of ten neighboring householders, who were held as mutual sureties or frank (free) pledges for each other's orderly conduct; so that each man was a mem-

ber of a tything, and was obliged to keep household rolls of his servants. Thus every liegeman was known to the law, and was taught his duties and obligations; and every tything was responsible for the production of its criminals, and obliged to pay a fine if they escaped. Every householder was liable to answer for any stranger who might stop at his house. "This mutual liability or suretyship was the pivot of all Alfred's administrative reform, and wrought a remarkable change in the kingdom, so that merchants and travellers could go about without armed guards. The forests were emptied of outlaws, and confidence and security succeeded distrust and lawlessness. . . . The frank pledge-system, which was worked in country districts, was supplied in towns by the machinery of the guilds, — institutions combining the benefit of modern clubs, insurance societies, and trades-unions. As a rule, they were limited to members of one trade or calling."

Mr. Pearson, in his history of England, as quoted by Hughes, thus sums up this great administrative reform for the preservation of life and property and order during the Middle Ages: —

"What is essential to remember is, that life and property were not secured to the Anglo-Saxon by the State, but by the loyal union of his fellow-citizens; the Saxon guilds are unmatched in the history of their times as evidences of self-

reliance, mutual trust, patient self-restraint, and orderly love of law among a young people.

"To recapitulate the reforms of Alfred in the administration of justice and the resettlement of the country, the old divisions of shires were carefully readjusted, and divided into hundreds and tythings. The alderman of the shire still remained the chief officer, but the office was no longer hereditary. The king appointed the alderman, or eorl, who was president of the shire gemot, or council, and chief judge of the county court as well as governor of the shire, but was assisted and probably controlled in his judicial capacity by justices appointed by the king, and not attached to the shire, or in any way dependent on the alderman. The vice-domini, or nominees of the alderman, were abolished, and an officer substituted for them called the reeve of the shire, or sheriff, who carried out the decrees of the courts. The hundreds and tythings were represented by their own officers, and had their hundred-courts and courts-leet, which exercised a trifling criminal jurisdiction, but were chiefly assemblies answering to our grand juries and parish vestries. All householders were members of them, and every man thus became responsible for keeping the king's peace."

In regard to the financial resources of Alfred we know but little. Probably they were great, considering the extent and population of the little kingdom over which he ruled, but inconsiderable in comparison with the revenues of England at the present day. To build fortresses, construct a navy, and keep in pay a considerable military force, — to say nothing of his own private

expenditure and the expense of his court, his public improvements, the endowment of churches, the support of schools, the relief of the poor, and keeping the highways and bridges in repair, — required a large income. This was derived from the public revenues, crown lands, and private property. The public revenue was raised chiefly by customs, tolls, and fines. The crown lands were very extensive, as well as the private property of the sovereign, as he had large estates in every county of his kingdom.

But whatever his income, he set apart one quarter of it for religious purposes, one-sixth for architecture, and one-eighth for the poor, besides a considerable sum for foreigners, whom he liberally patronized. He richly endowed schools and monasteries. He was devoted to the Church, and his relations with the Pope were pleasant and intimate, although more independent than those of many of his successors.

All the biographers of Alfred speak of his zealous efforts in behalf of education. He established a school for the young nobles of his court, and taught them himself. His teachers were chiefly learned men drawn from the continent, especially from the Franks, and were well paid by the king. He made the scholarly Asser — a Welsh monk, afterwards bishop of Sherborne, from whose biography of Alfred our best information is derived — his counsellor and friend, and from his instruc-

tions acquired much knowledge. To Asser he gave the general superintendence of education, not merely for laymen, but for priests. In his own words, he declared that his wish was that all free-born youth should persevere in learning until they could read the English Scriptures. For those who desired to devote themselves to the Church, he provided the means for the study of Latin. He gave all his children a good education. His own thirst for knowledge was remarkable, considering his cares and public duties. He copied the prayer-book with his own hands, and always carried it in his bosom. Asser read to him all the books which were then accessible. From an humble scholar the king soon became an author. He translated "Consolations of Philosophy" from the Latin of Bœthius, a Roman senator of the sixth century,—the most remarkable literary effort of the declining days of the Roman Empire, and highly prized in the Middle Ages. He also translated the "Chronicle of the World," by Orosius, a Spanish priest, who lived in the early part of the fifth century,—a work suggested by Saint Augustine's "City of God." The "Ecclesiastical History" of Bede was also translated by Alfred. He is said to have translated the Proverbs of Solomon and the Fables of Æsop. His greatest literary work, however, was the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the principal authority of the reign of Alfred. No man of his day wrote the Saxon language so purely as did Alfred himself; and he was

distinguished not only for his knowledge of Latin, but for profound philosophical reflections interspersed through his writings, which would do honor to a Father of the Church. He was also a poet, inferior only to Cædmon. Nor was his knowledge confined to literature alone; it was extended to the arts, especially architecture, ship-building, and silver-workmanship. He built more beautiful edifices than any of his predecessors. He also had a knowledge of geography beyond his contemporaries, and sent a Norwegian ship-master to explore the White Sea. He enriched his translation of Orosius by a sketch of the new geographical discoveries in the North. In fact, there was scarcely any branch of knowledge then known in which Alfred was not well instructed,—being a remarkably learned man for his age, and as enlightened as he was learned.

But in the midst of his reforms and wise efforts to civilize his people, the war-clouds gathered once more, and he was obliged to put forth all his energies to defend his realm from the incursions of his old enemies. The death of Charles the Bald in the year 877 left France in a very disordered state, and the Northmen under Hasting, one of the greatest of their vikings, recommenced their ravages. In 893 they crossed the Channel in two hundred and fifty vessels, and invaded England, followed soon after by Hasting with another large detachment, and strongly intrenched themselves near

Winchester. Alfred at the same time strongly fortified his own position, about thirty miles distant, and kept so close a watch over the movements of his enemies that they rarely ventured beyond their own intrenchments. A sort of desultory warfare succeeded, and continued for a year without any decisive results. At last the Danes, getting weary, broke up their camps, and resolved to pass into East Anglia. They were met by Alfred at Farnham and forced to fight, which resulted in their defeat and the loss of all the spoils they had taken and all the horses they had brought from France. The discomfited Danes retreated, by means of their ships, to an island in the Thames, at its junction with the Colne, where they were invested by Alfred. They would soon have been at the mercy of the Saxon king, had it not unfortunately happened that the Danes on the east coast, from Essex to Northumbria, joined the invaders, which unlooked-for event compelled Alfred to raise the blockade, and send Ethelred his son to the west, where the Danes were again strongly intrenched at Banfleet, near London. Their camp was successfully stormed, and much booty was taken, together with the wife and sons of Hasting. The Danish fleet was also captured, and some of the vessels were sent to London. But Hasting still held out, in spite of his disaster, and succeeded in intrenching himself with the remnants of his army at Shoebury, ten miles from Banfleet, from

which he issued on a marauding expedition along the northern banks of the Thames, carrying fire and sword wherever he went, thence turned northward, making no halt until he reached the banks of the Severn, where he again intrenched himself, but was again beaten. Hasting saved himself by falling back on a part of East Anglia removed from Alfred's influence, and appeared near Chester. Alfred himself had undertaken the task of guarding Exeter and the coasts of Devonshire and South Wales, where he wintered, leaving Ethelred to pursue Hasting.

Thus a year passed in the successful defence of the kingdom, the Danes having gained no important advantage. At the end of the second campaign Hasting still maintained his ground and fortified himself on the Thames, within twenty miles of London. At the close of the third year, Hasting, being driven from his position on the Thames, established himself in Shropshire. "In the spring of 897 Hasting broke up his last camp on the English soil, being foiled at every point, and crossed the sea with the remnant of his followers to the banks of the Seine." The war was now virtually at an end, and the Danes utterly defeated.

The work for which Alfred was raised up was at last accomplished. He had stayed the inundations of the Northmen, defended his kingdom of Wessex, and planted the seeds of a higher civilization in England,

winning the love and admiration of his subjects. The greatness of Alfred should not be measured by the size of his kingdom. It is not the bigness of a country that gives fame to its illustrious men. The immortal heroes of Palestine and Greece ruled over territories smaller and of less importance than the kingdom of Wessex. It is the greatness of their characters that preserves their name and memory.

Alfred died in the year 901, at the age of fifty-two, worn out with disease and labors, leaving his kingdom in a prosperous state; and it had rest under his son Edward for nine years. Then the contest was renewed with the Danes, and it was under the reign of Edward that Mercia was once more annexed to Wessex, as well as Northumbria. Edward died in 925, and under the reign of his son Æthelstan the Saxon kingdom reached still greater prosperity. The completion of the West Saxon realm was reserved for Edmund, son of Æthelstan, who ascended the throne in 940, being a mere boy. He was ruled by the greatest statesman of that age, the celebrated Dunstan, Abbot of Glastonbury and Archbishop of Canterbury,—a great statesman and a great Churchman, like Hincmar of Rheims.

Thus the heroism and patience of Alfred were rewarded by the restoration of the Saxon power, and the absorption of what Mr. Green calls "Danelagh," after a

long and bitter contest, of which Alfred was the greatest hero. In surveying his conquests we are reminded of the long contest which Charlemagne had with the Saxons. Next to Charlemagne, Alfred was the greatest prince who reigned in Europe after the dissolution of the Roman Empire, until the Norman Conquest. He fought not for the desire of bequeathing a great empire to his descendants, but to rescue his country from ruin, in the midst of overwhelming calamities. It was a struggle for national existence, not military glory. In the successful defence of his kingdom against the ravages of Pagan invaders he may be likened to William the Silent in preserving the nationality of Holland. No European monarch from the time of Alfred can be compared to him in the service he rendered to his country. The memorableness of a war is to be gauged not by the number of the combatants, but by the sacredness of a cause. It was the devotion of Washington to a great cause which embalms his memory in the heart of the world. And no English king has left so hallowed a name as Alfred: it was because he was a benefactor, and infused his energy of purpose into a discouraged and afflicted people. How far his saint-like virtues were imitated it is difficult to tell. Religion was the groundwork of his character, — faith in God and devotion to duty. His piety was also more enlightened than the piety of his age, since it was

practical and not ascetic. His temper was open, frank, and genial. He loved books and strangers and travellers. There was nothing cynical about him, in spite of his perplexities and discouragements. He had a beautifully balanced character and a many-sided nature. He had the power of inspiring confidence in defeat and danger. His judgment and good sense seemed to fit him for any emergency. He had the same control over himself that he had over others. His patriotism and singleness of purpose inspired devotion. He felt his burdens, but did not seek to throw them off. "Hardship and sorrow," said he, "not a king but would wish to be without these if he could; but I know he cannot." "So long as I have lived I have striven to live worthily." "I desire to leave to the men that come after me a remembrance of me in good works." These were some of his precious utterances, so that the love which he won a thousand years ago has lingered around his name from that day to this.

It was a strong sense of duty, quickened by a Christian life, which gave to the character of Alfred its peculiar radiance. He felt his responsibilities as a Christian ruler. He was affable, courteous, accessible. His body was frail and delicate, but his energies were never relaxed. Pride and haughtiness were unknown in his intercourse with bishops or nobles. He had no striking defects. He was the model of a man and a king; and

he left the impress of his genius on all the subsequent institutions of his country. "The tree," says Dr. Pauli, one of his ablest biographers, "which now casts its shadow far and near over the world, when menaced with destruction in its bud, was carefully guarded by Alfred; but at the period when it was ready to burst forth into a plant, he was forced to leave it to the influence of time. Many great men have occupied themselves with the care of this tree, and each in his own way has advanced its growth. William the Conqueror, with his iron hand, bent the tender branches to his will; Henry the Second ruled the Saxons with true Roman pride, but in *Magna Charta* the old German nature became aroused and worked powerfully, even among the barons. It became free under Edward the Third,—that prince so ambitious of conquest: the old language and the old law, the one somewhat altered, the other much softened, opened the path to a new era. The nation stood like an oak in the full strength of its leafy maturity; and to this strength the Reformation is indebted for its accomplishment. Elizabeth, the greatest woman who ever sat upon a throne, occupied a central position in a golden age of power and literature. Then came the Stuarts, who with their despotic ideas outraged the deeply-rooted Saxon individuality of the English, and by their fall contributed to the sure development of that freedom which was founded so long

before. The stern Cromwell and the astute William the Third aided in preparing for the now advanced nation that path in which it has ever since moved. The Anglo-Saxon race has already attained maturity in the New World, and, founded on these pillars, it will triumph in all places and in every age. Alfred's name will always be placed among those of the great spirits of this earth; and so long as men regard their past history with reverence they will not venture to bring forward any other in comparison with him who saved the West Saxon nation from complete destruction, and in whose heart all the virtues dwelt in such harmonious concord."

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QUEEN ELIZABETH.

A. D. 1533–1603.

WOMAN AS A SOVEREIGN.

QUEEN ELIZABETH.

WOMAN AS A SOVEREIGN.

I DO not present Queen Elizabeth either as a very interesting or as a faultless woman. As a woman she is not a popular favorite. But it is my object to present her as a queen; to show with what dignity and ability a woman may fill one of the most difficult and responsible stations of the world. It is certain that we associate with her a very prosperous and successful reign; and if she was lacking in those feminine qualities which make woman interesting to man, we are constrained to admire her for those talents and virtues which shed lustre around a throne. She is unquestionably one of the links in the history of England and of modern civilization; and her reign is so remarkable, considering the difficulties with which she had to contend, that she may justly be regarded as one of the benefactors of her age and country. It is a pleasant task to point out the greatness, rather than the defects, of so illustrious a woman.

It is my main object to describe her services to her country, for it is by services that all monarchs are to be judged; and all sovereigns, especially those armed with great power, are exposed to unusual temptations, which must ever qualify our judgments. Even bad men — like Cæsar, Richelieu, and Napoleon — have obtained favorable verdicts in view of their services. And when sovereigns whose characters have been sullied by weaknesses and defects, yet who have escaped great crimes and scandals and devoted themselves to the good of their country, have proved themselves to be wise, enlightened, and patriotic, great praise has been awarded to them. Thus, Henry IV. of France, and William III. of England have been admired in spite of their defects.

Queen Elizabeth is the first among the great female sovereigns of the world with whose reign we associate a decided progress in national wealth, power, and prosperity; so that she ranks with the great men who have administered kingdoms. If I can prove this fact, the sex should be proud of so illustrious a woman, and should be charitable to those foibles which sullied the beauty of her character, since they were in part faults of the age, and developed by the circumstances which surrounded her.

She was born in the year 1533, the rough age of Luther, when Charles V. was dreaming of establishing

After the so-called "Ermine" portrait, painted by F. Zucchero, Hatfield House, England

QUEEN ELIZABETH

a united continental military empire, and when the princes of the House of Valois were battling with the ideas of the Reformation, — an earnest, revolutionary, and progressive age. She was educated as the second daughter of Henry VIII. naturally would be; having the celebrated Ascham as her tutor in Greek, Latin, French, and Italian. She was precocious as well as studious, and astonished her teachers by her attainments. She was probably the best-educated woman in England next to Lady Jane Grey, and she excelled in those departments of knowledge for which novels have given such distaste in these more enlightened times.

Elizabeth was a mere girl when her mother, Anne Boleyn, was executed for infidelities and levities to which her husband could not be blind, had he been less suspicious, — a cruel execution, which nothing short of high-treason could have justified even in that rough age. Though her birth was declared to be illegitimate by her cruel and unscrupulous father, yet she was treated as a princess. She was seventeen when her hateful old father died; and during the six years when the government was in the hands of Somerset, Edward VI. being a minor, Elizabeth was exposed to no peculiar perils except those of the heart. It is said that Sir Thomas Seymour, brother to the Protector, made a strong impression on her, and that she

would have married him had the Council consented. By nature, Elizabeth was affectionate, though prudent. Her love for Seymour was uncalculating and unselfish, though he was unworthy of it. Indeed, it was her misfortune always to misplace her affections, — which is so often the case in the marriages of superior women, as if they loved the image merely which their own minds created, as Dante did when he bowed down to Beatrice. When we see intellectual men choosing weak and silly women for wives, and women of exalted character selecting unworthy and wicked husbands, it does seem as if Providence determines all matrimonial unions independently of our own wills and settled purposes. How often is wealth wedded to poverty, beauty to ugliness, and amiability to ill-temper! The hard, cold, unsocial, unsympathetic, wooden, scheming, selfish man is the only one who seems to attain his end, since he can bide his time, — wait for somebody to fancy him.

Elizabeth had that mixed character which made her life a perpetual conflict between her inclinations and her interests. Her generous impulses and affectionate nature made her peculiarly susceptible, while her prudence and her pride kept her from a foolish marriage. She may have loved unwisely, but she had sufficient self-control to prevent a mésalliance. While she may have resigned herself at times to the fascinations of

accomplished men, she yet fathomed the abyss into which imprudence would bury her forever.

On the accession of Mary, her elder sister, daughter of Catharine of Aragon, Elizabeth's position was exceedingly critical, exposed as she was to the intrigues of the Catholics and the jealousy of the Queen. And when we remember that the great question and issue of that age was whether the Catholic or Protestant religion should have the ascendency, and that this ascendency seemed to hinge upon the private inclinations of the sovereign who in the furtherance of this great end would scruple at nothing to accomplish it, and that the greatest crimes committed for its sake would be justified by all the sophistries that religious partisanship could furnish, and be upheld by all bigots and statesmen as well as priests, it is really remarkable that Elizabeth was spared. For Mary was not only urged on to the severest measures by Gardiner and Bonner (the bishops of Winchester and London), and by all the influences of Rome, to which she was devoted body and soul, — yea, by all her confidential advisers in the State, to save themselves from future contingencies, — but she was also jealous of her sister, as Elizabeth was afterwards jealous of Mary Stuart. And it would have been as easy for Mary to execute Elizabeth as it was for Elizabeth to execute the Queen of Scots, or Henry VIII. to behead his wives;

and such a crime would have been excused as readily as the execution of Somerset or of the Lady Jane Grey, both from political necessity and religious expediency. Elizabeth was indeed subjected to great humiliations, and even compelled to sue for her life. What more piteous than her letter to Mary, begging only for an interview: "Wherefore I humbly beseech your Majesty to let me answer before yourself; and, once again kneeling with humbleness of heart, I earnestly crave to speak to your Highness, which I would not be so bold as to desire if I knew not myself most clear, as I know myself most true." Here is a woman pleading for her life to a sister to whom she had done no wrong, and whose only crime was in being that sister's heir. What an illustration of the jealousy of royalty and the bitterness of religious feuds; and what a contrast in this servile speech to that arrogance which Elizabeth afterward assumed towards her Parliament and greatest lords! Ah, to what cringing meanness are most people reduced by adversity! In what pride are we apt to indulge in the hour of triumph! How circumstances change the whole appearance of our lives!

Elizabeth, however, in order to save her life, was obliged to dissemble. If her true Protestant opinions had been avowed, I doubt if she could have escaped. We do not see in this dissimulation anything very

lofty; yet she acted with singular tact and discretion. It is creditable, however, to Mary that she did not execute her sister. She showed herself more noble than Elizabeth did later in her treatment of the Queen of Scots. History calls her the "Bloody Mary;" and it must be admitted that she was the victim and slave of religious bigotry, and that she sanctioned many bloody executions. And yet it would appear that her nature was, after all, affectionate, which is evinced in the fact that she did spare the life of Elizabeth. Here her better impulses gained the victory over craft and policy and religious intolerance, and rescued her name from the infamy to which such a crime would have doomed her, and which her Church would have sanctioned, and in which it would have rejoiced as much as it did in the slaughter of Saint Bartholomew.

The crocodile tears which Elizabeth is said to have shed when the death of her sister Mary was announced to her at Hatfield were soon wiped away in the pomps and enthusiasms which hailed her accession to the throne. This was in 1558, when she was twenty-five, in the fulness of her attractions and powers. Great expectations were formed of her wisdom and genius. She had passed through severe experiences; she had led a life of study and reflection; she was gifted with talents and graces. "Her accomplishments, her misfortunes, and her brilliant youth exalted into passionate homage

the principle of loyalty, and led to extravagant panegyrics." She was good-looking, if she was not beautiful, since the expression of her countenance showed benignity, culture, and vivacity. She had piercing dark eyes, a clear complexion, and animated features. She was in perfect health, capable of great fatigue, apt in business, sagacious, industrious, witty, learned, and fond of being surrounded with illustrious men. She was high-church in her sympathies, yet a Protestant in the breadth of her views and in the fulness of her reforms. Above all, she was patriotic and disinterested in her efforts to develop the resources of her kingdom and to preserve it from entangling wars.

The kingdom was far from being prosperous when Elizabeth assumed the reins of government, and it is the enormous stride in civilization which England made during her reign, beset with so many perils, which constitutes her chief claim to the admiration of mankind. Let it be borne in mind that she began her rule in perplexities, anxieties, and embarrassments. The crown was encumbered with debts; the nobles were ambitious and factious; the people were poor, dispirited, unimportant, and distracted by the claims of two hostile religions. Only one bishop in the whole realm was found willing to crown her. Scotland was convulsed with factions, and was a standing menace, growing out of the marriage of Mary Stuart with a

French prince. Barbarous Ireland was in a state of chronic rebellion; France, Spain, and Rome were decidedly hostile; and all Catholic Europe aimed at the overthrow of England. Philip II. had adopted the dying injunction of his father to extinguish the Protestant religion, and the princes of the House of Valois were leagued with Rome for the attainment of this end. At home, Elizabeth had to contend with a jealous Parliament, a factious nobility, an empty purse, and a divided people. The people generally were rude and uneducated; the language was undeveloped; education was chiefly confined to nobles and priests; the poor were oppressed by feudal laws. No great work in English history, poetry, or philosophy had yet appeared. The comforts and luxuries of life were scarcely enjoyed even by the rich. Chimneys were just beginning to be used. The people slept on mats of straw; they ate without forks on pewter or wooden platters; they drank neither tea nor coffee, but drank what their ancestors did in the forests of Germany, — beer; their houses, thatched with straw, were dark, dingy, and uncomfortable. Commerce was small; manufactures were in their infancy; the coin was debased, and money was scarce; trade was in the hands of monopolists; coaches were almost unknown; the roads were impassable except for horsemen, and were infested with robbers; only the rich could afford wheaten bread;

agricultural implements were of the most primitive kind; animal food, for the greater part of the year, was eaten only in a salted state; enterprise of all kinds was restricted within narrow limits; beggars and vagrants were so numerous that the most stringent laws were necessary to protect the people against them; profane swearing was nearly universal; the methods of executing capital punishments were revolting; the rudest sports amused the people; the parochial clergy were ignorant and sensual; country squires sought nothing higher than fox-hunting; it took several days for letters to reach the distant counties; the population numbered only four millions; there was nothing grand and imposing in art but the palaces of nobles and the Gothic monuments of mediæval Europe.

Such was "Merrie England" on the accession of Elizabeth to the throne, — a rude nation of feudal nobles, rural squires, and ignorant people, who toiled for a mere pittance on the lands of cold, unsympathetic masters; without books, without schools, without privileges, without rights, except to breathe the common air and indulge in coarse pleasures and religious holidays and village fêtes.

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the people were loyal, religious, and brave; that they had the fear of God before their eyes, and felt personal

responsibility to Him, so that crimes were uncommon except among the lowest and most abandoned; that family ties were strong; that simple hospitalities were everywhere exercised; that healthy pleasures stimulated no inordinate desires; that the people, if poor, had enough to eat and drink; that service was not held to be degrading; that churches were not deserted; that books, what few there were, did not enervate or demoralize; that science did not attempt to ignore the moral government of God; that laws were a terror to evil-doers; that philanthropists did not seek to reform the world by mechanical inventions, or elevate society by upholding the majesty of man rather than the majesty of God, — teaching the infallibility of congregated masses of ignorance, inexperience, and conceit. Even in those rude times there were the certitudes of religious faith, of domestic endearments, of patriotic devotion, of respect for parents, of loyalty to rulers, of kindness to the poor and miserable; there were the latent fires of freedom, the impulses of generous enthusiasm, and resignation to the ills which could not be removed. So that in England, in Elizabeth's time, there was a noble material for Christianity and art and literature to work upon, and to develop a civilization such as had not existed previously on this earth, — a civilization destined to spread throughout the world in new institutions, inventions, laws, language, and litera-

ture, binding hostile races together, and proclaiming the sovereignty of intelligence, — the νοῦς κρατεῖ of the old Ionian philosophers, — with that higher sovereignty which Moses based upon the Ten Commandments, and that higher law still which Jesus taught upon the Mount.

Yet with all this fine but rude material for future greatness, it was nevertheless a glaring fact that the condition of England on the accession of Elizabeth was most discouraging, — a poor and scattered agricultural nation, without a navy of any size, without a regular army, with factions in every quarter, with struggling and contending religious parties, with a jealous parliament of unenlightened country squires; yet a nation seriously threatened by the most powerful monarchies of the Continent, who detested the doctrines which were then taking root in the land. Against the cabals of Rome, the navies of Spain, and the armies of France, — alike hostile and dangerous, — England could make but a feeble show of physical forces, and was protected only by her insular position. The public dangers were so imminent that there was needed not only a strong hand but a stout heart and a wise head at the helm. Excessive caution was necessary, perpetual vigilance was imperative; a single imprudent measure might be fatal in such exigencies. And this accounts for the vacillating policy of Elizabeth, so often condemned

by historians. It did not proceed from weakness of head, but from real necessity occasioned by constant embarrassments and changing circumstances. According to all the canons of expediency, it was the sign of a sagacious ruler to temporize and promise and deceive in that sad perplexity. Governments, thus far in the history of nations, have been carried on upon different principles from those that bind the conduct of individuals, especially when the weak contend against the strong. This, abstractly, is not to be defended. Governments and individuals alike are bound by the same laws of immutable morality in their general relations; but the rules of war are different from the rules of peace. Governments are expediencies to suit peculiar crises and exigencies. A man assaulted by robbers would be a fool to fall back on the passive virtues of non-resistance.

Elizabeth had to deal both with religious bigots and unscrupulous kings. We may be disgusted with the course she felt it politic to pursue, but it proved successful. A more generous and open course might have precipitated an attack when she was unprepared and defenceless. Her dalliances and expediencies and dissimulations delayed the evil day, until she was ready for the death-struggle; and when the tempest of angry human forces finally broke upon her defenceless head, she was saved only by a storm

of wind and rain which Providence kindly and opportunely sent. Had the "Invincible Armada" been permitted to invade England at the beginning of her reign, there would probably have been another Spanish conquest. What chance would the untrained militia of a scattered population, without fortresses or walled cities or military leaders of skill, have had against the veteran soldiers who were marshalled under Philip II., with all the experiences learned in the wars of Charles V. and in the conquest of Peru and Mexico, aided, too, by the forces of France and the terrors of the Vatican and the money of the Flemish manufacturers? It was the dictate of self-preservation which induced Elizabeth to prevaricate, and to deceive the powerful monarchs who were in league against her. If ever lying and cheating were justifiable, they were then; if political jesuitism is ever defensible, it was in the sixteenth century. So that I cannot be hard on the embarrassed Queen for a policy which on the strict principles of morality it would be difficult to defend. It was a dark age of conspiracies, rebellions, and cabals. In dealing with the complicated relations of government in that day, there were no recognized principles but those of expediency. Even in our own times, expediency rather than right too often seems to guide nations. It is not just and fair, therefore, to expect from a sovereign, in Queen Elizabeth's time, that openness and fairness

which are the result only of a higher national civilization. What would be blots on government to-day were not deemed blots in the sixteenth century. Elizabeth must be judged by the standard of her age, not of ours, in her official and public acts.

We must remember, also, that this great Queen was indorsed, supported, and even instructed by the ablest and wisest and most patriotic statesmen that were known to her generation. Lord Burleigh, her prime minister, was a marvel of political insight, industry, and fidelity. If he had not the commanding genius of Thomas Cromwell or the ambitious foresight of Richelieu, he surpassed the statesmen of his day in patriotic zeal and in disinterested labors, — not to extend the boundaries of the empire, but to develop national resources and make the country strong for defence. He was a plodding, wary, cautious, far-seeing, long-headed old statesman, whose opinions it was not safe for Elizabeth to oppose; and although she was arbitrary and opinionated herself, she generally followed Burleigh's counsels, — unwillingly at times, but firmly when she perceived the necessity; for she was, with all her pertinacity, open to conviction of reason. I cannot deny that she sometimes headed off her prime-minister and deceived him, and otherwise complicated the difficulties that beset her reign; but this was only when she felt a strong

personal repugnance to the state measures which he found it imperative to pursue. After all, Elizabeth was a woman, and the woman was not utterly lost in the Queen. It is greatly to her credit, however, that she retained the services of this old statesman for forty years, and that she filled the great offices in the State and Church with men of experience, genius, and wisdom. She made Parker the Archbishop of Canterbury, — a man of remarkable moderation and breadth of mind, whose reforms were carried on without exciting hostilities, and have survived the fanaticisms and hostile attacks of generations. Walsingham, her ambassador at Paris, and afterwards her secretary of state, ferreted out the plots of the Jesuits and the intrigues of hostile courts, and rendered priceless service by his acuteness and diligence. Lord Effingham, one of the Howards, defeated the "Invincible Armada." Sir Thomas Gresham managed her finances so ably that she was never without money. Coke was her attorney. Sir Nicholas Bacon — the ablest lawyer in the realm, and a stanch Protestant — was her lord-keeper; while his illustrious son, the immortal Francis Bacon, though not adequately rewarded, was always consulted by the Queen in great legal difficulties. I say nothing of those elegant and gallant men who were the ornaments of her court, and in some instances the generals of her armies and admirals of her navies, — Sackville, Raleigh,

Sidney, not to mention Essex and Leicester, all of whom were distinguished for talents and services; men who had no equals in their respective provinces; so gifted that it is difficult to determine whether the greatness of her reign was more owing to the talents of the ministers or to the wisdom of the Queen herself. Unless she had been a great woman, I doubt whether she would have discerned the merits of these men, and employed them in her service and kept them so long in office.

It was by these great men that Elizabeth was ruled, — so far as she was ruled at all, — not by favorites, like her successors, James and Charles. The favorites at the court of Elizabeth were rarely trusted with great powers unless they were men of signal abilities, and regarded as such by the nation itself. While she lavished favors upon them, — sometimes to the disgust of the old nobility, — she was never ruled by them, as James was by Buckingham, and Louis XV. by Madame de Pompadour. Elizabeth was not above coquetry, it is true; but after toying with Leicester and Raleigh, — never, though, to the serious injury of her reputation as a woman, — she would retire to the cabinet of her ministers and yield to the sage suggestions of Burleigh and Walsingham. At her council-board she was an entirely different woman from what she was among her courtiers: *there* she would tolerate no flattery, and was controlled only

by reason and good sense, — as practical as Burleigh himself, and as hard-working and business-like ; cold, intellectual, and clear-headed, utterly without enthusiasm.

Perhaps the greatest service which Elizabeth rendered to the English nation and the cause of civilization was her success in establishing Protestantism as the religion of the land, against so many threatening obstacles. In this she was aided and directed by some of the most enlightened divines that England ever had. The liturgy of Cranmer was re-established, preferments were conferred on married priests, the learned and pious were raised to honor, eminent scholars and theologians were invited to England, the Bible was revised and freely circulated, and an alliance was formed between learning and religion by the great men who adorned the universities. Though inclined to ritualism, Elizabeth was broad and even moderate in reform, desiring, according to the testimony of Bacon, that all extremes of idolatry and superstition should be avoided on the one hand, and levity and contempt on the other ; that all Church matters should be examined without sophistical niceties or subtle speculations.

The basis of the English Church as thus established by Elizabeth was half-way between Rome and Geneva, — a compromise, I admit ; but all established institutions and governments accepted by the people are based

on compromise. How can there be even family government without some compromise, inasmuch as husband and wife cannot always be expected to think exactly alike?

At any rate, the Church established by Elizabeth was signally adapted to the wants and genius of the English people, — evangelical, on the whole, in its creed, though not Calvinistic; unobtrusive in its forms, easy in its discipline, and aristocratic in its government; subservient to bishops, but really governed by the enlightened few who really govern all churches, Independent, Presbyterian, or Methodist; supported by the State, yet wielding only spiritual authority; giving its influence to uphold the crown and the established institutions of the country; conservative, yet earnestly Protestant. In the sixteenth century it was the Church of reform, of progress, of advancing and liberalizing thought. Elizabeth herself was a zealous Protestant, protecting the cause whenever it was persecuted, encouraging Huguenots, and not disdaining the Presbyterians of Scotland. She was not as generous to the Protestants of Holland and France as we could have wished, for she was obliged to husband her resources, and hence she often seemed parsimonious; but she was the acknowledged head of the reform movement in Europe. Her hostility to Rome and Roman influence was inexorable. She may not have carried reforms as far

as the Puritans desired, and who can wonder at that? Their spirit was aggressive, revolutionary, bitter, and, pushed to its logical sequences, was hostility to the throne itself, as proved by their whole subsequent history until Cromwell was dead. And this hostility Burleigh perceived as well as the Queen, which doubtless led to severities that our age cannot pretend to justify.

The Queen did dislike and persecute the Puritans, not, I think, so much because they made war on the surplice, liturgy, and divine right of bishops, as because they were at heart opposed to all absolute authority both in State and Church, and when goaded by persecution would hurl even kings from their thrones. It is to be regretted that Elizabeth was so severe on those who differed from her; she had no right to insist on uniformity with her conscience in those matters which are above any human authority. The Reformation in its severest logical consequences, in its grandest deductions, affirms the right of private judgment as the mighty pillar of its support. All parties, Presbyterian as well as Episcopalian, sought uniformity; they only differed as to its standard. With the Queen and ministers and prelates it was the laws of the land; with the Puritans, the decrees of provincial and national synods. Hence, if Elizabeth insisted that her subjects should conform to her notions and

the ordinances of Parliament and convocations, she showed a spirit which was universal. She was superior even in toleration to all contemporaneous sovereigns, Catholic or Protestant, man or woman. Contrast her persecutions of Catholics and Puritans with the persecution by Catherine de Médicis and Charles IX. and Philip II. and Ferdinand II.; or even with that under the Regent Murray of Scotland, when churches and abbeys were ruthlessly destroyed. Contrast her Archbishop of Canterbury with the religious dictator of Scotland. She kindled no *auto-da-fé*, like the Spaniards; she incited no wholesale massacre, like the demented fury of France; she had a loving care of her subjects that no religious bigotry could suppress. She did not seek to exterminate Catholics or Puritans, but simply to build up the Church of England as the shield and defence and enlargement of Protestantism in times of unmitigated religious ferocity, — a Protestantism that has proved the bulwark of European liberties, as it was the foundation of all progress in England. In giving an impulse to this great emancipating movement, even if she did not push it to its remote logical end, Elizabeth was a benefactor of her country and of mankind, and is not unjustly called a nursing-mother of the Church, — being so regarded by Protestants, not in England merely, but on the Continent of Europe. When was ever a religious revolution effected, or a

national church established, with so little bloodshed? When have ever such great changes proved so popular and so beneficial, and, I may add, so permanent? After all the revolutions in English thought and life for three hundred years, the Church as established by Elizabeth is still dear to the great body of English people, and has survived every agitation. And even many things which the Puritans sought to sweep away — the music of the choir, organs, and chants, even the holidays of venerated ages — are now revived by the descendants of the Puritans with ancient ardor; showing how permanent are such festivals as Christmas and Easter in the heart of Christendom, and how hopeless it is to eradicate what the Church and Christianity, from their earliest ages, have sanctioned and commended.

The next great service which Elizabeth rendered to England was a development of its resources, — ever a primal effort with wise statesmen, with such administrators as Sully, Colbert, Richelieu. The policy of her Government was not the policy of aggrandizement in war, which has ever provoked jealousies and hatreds in other nations, and led to dangerous combinations, and sowed the seed of future wars. The policy of Napoleon was retaliated in the conquests of Prussia in our day; and the policy of Prussia may yet lead to its future dismemberment, in spite of the imperial realm

shaped by Bismarck. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," — an eternal law, binding both individuals and nations, from which there is no escape. The government of Elizabeth did not desire or aim at foreign conquests, — the great error of European statesmen on the Continent; it sought the establishment of the monarchy at home, and the development of the various industries of the nation, since in these industries are both power and wealth. Commerce was encouraged, and she girt her island around with those "wooden walls" which have proved England's impregnable defence against every subsequent combination of tyrants and conquerors. The East India Company was formed, and the fisheries of Newfoundland established. It was under Elizabeth's auspices that Frobisher penetrated to the Polar Sea, that Sir Francis Drake circumnavigated the globe, that Sir Walter Raleigh colonized Virginia, and that Sir Humphrey Gilbert attempted to discover a northwestern passage to India. Manufactories were set up for serges, so that wool was no longer exported, but the raw material was consumed at home. A colony of Flemish weavers was planted in the heart of England. The prosperity of dyers and cloth-dressers and weavers dates from this reign, although some attempts at manufactures were made in the reign of Edward III. A refuge was given to persecuted foreigners, and work

was found for them to do. Pasture-land was converted to tillage, — not, as is now the case, to parks for the wealthy classes. Labor was made respectable, and enterprise of all kinds was stimulated. Wealth was sought in industry and economy, rather than in mines of gold and silver; so that wealth was doubled during this reign, and the population increased from four millions to six millions. All the old debts of the Crown were paid, both principal and interest, and the debased coin was called in at a great sacrifice to the royal revenue. The arbitrary management of commerce by foreign merchants was broken up, and weights and measures were duly regulated. The Queen did not revoke monopolies, it is true; the principles of political economy were not then sufficiently understood. But even monopolies, which disgraced the old Roman world, and are a disgrace to any age, were not so gigantic and demoralizing in those times as in our own, under our free institutions; they were not used to corrupt legislation and bribe judges and prevent justice, but simply to enrich politicians and favorites, and as a reward for distinguished services.

Justice in the courts was impartially administered; there was security to property and punishment for crime. No great culprits escaped conviction; nor, when convicted, were they allowed to purchase, with their stolen wealth, the immunities of freedom. The

laws were not a mockery, as in republican Rome, where demagogues had the ascendency, and prepared the way for usurpation and tyranny. All the expenses of the government were managed economically, — so much so that the Queen herself received from Parliament, for forty years, only an average grant of £65,000 a year. She disliked to ask money from the Commons, and they granted subsidies with extreme reluctance; the result was that between the two the greatest economy was practised, and the people were not over-burdened by taxation.

Elizabeth hated and detested war as the source of all calamities, and never embarked upon it except under compulsion. All her wars were virtually defensive, to maintain the honor, safety, and dignity of the nation. She did not even seek to recover Calais, which the French had held for three hundred years; although she took Havre, to gain a temporary foothold for her troops. She did not strive for military *éclat* or foreign possessions in Europe, feeling that the strength of England, like the ancient Jewish commonwealth, was in the cultivation of the peaceful virtues; and yet she made war when it became imperative. She gave free audience to her subjects, paid attention to all petitions, and was indefatigable in business. She made her own glory identical with the prosperity of the realm; and if she did not rule *by* the people, she ruled *for* the

people, as enlightened and patriotic monarchs ever have ruled. It is indisputable that the whole nation loved her and honored her to the last, even when disappointments had saddened her and the intoxicating delusions of life had been dispelled. She bestowed honors and benefits with frankness and cordiality. She ever sought to base her authority on the affections of the people, — the only support even of absolute thrones. She was ever ready with a witticism, a smile, and a pleasant word. Though she gave vent to peevishness and irritability when crossed, and even would swear before her ministers and courtiers in private, yet in public she disguised her resentments, and always appeared dignified and graceful; so that the people, when they saw her majestic manners, or heard her loving speeches, or beheld her mounted at the head of armies or shining unrivalled in grand festivals, or listened to her learning on public occasions, — such as when she extemporized Latin orations at Oxford, — were filled with pride and admiration, and were ready to expose their lives in her service.

The characteristic excellence of Elizabeth's reign, as it seems to me, was good government. She had extraordinary executive ability, directed to all matters of public interest. Her government was not marked by great and brilliant achievements, but by perpetual vigilance, humanity, economy, and liberal policy. There

were no destructive and wasting wars, no passion for military glory, no successions of court follies, no extravagance in palace-building, no egotistical aims and pleasures such as marked the reign of Louis XIV., which cut the sinews of national strength, impoverished the nobility, disheartened the people, and sowed the seeds of future revolution. That modern Nebuchadnezzar spent on one palace £40,000,000; while Elizabeth spent on all her palaces, processions, journeys, carriages, servants, and dresses £65,000 a year. She was indeed fond of visiting her subjects, and perhaps subjected her nobles to a burdensome hospitality. But the Earl of Leicester could well afford three hundred and sixty-five hogsheads of beer when he entertained the Queen at Kenilworth, since he was rich enough to fortify his castle with ten thousand men; nor was it difficult for the Earl of Derby to feast the royal party, when his domestic servants numbered two hundred and forty. She may have exacted presents on her birthday; but the courtiers who gave her laces and ruffs and jewelry received monopolies in return.

The most common charge against Elizabeth as a sovereign is, that she was arbitrary and tyrannical; nor can she be wholly exculpated from this charge. Her reign was despotic, so far as the Constitution would allow; but it was a despotism according to the laws. Under her reign the people had as much liberty as at

any preceding period of English history. She did not encroach on the Constitution. The Constitution and the precedents of the past gave her the Star Chamber, and the High Commission Court, and the disposal of monopolies, and the absolute command of the military and naval forces; but these great prerogatives she did not abuse. In her direst necessities she never went beyond the laws, and seldom beyond the wishes of the people.

It is expecting too much of sovereigns to abdicate their own powers except upon compulsion; and still more, to increase the political power of the people. The most illustrious sovereigns have never parted willingly with their own prerogatives. Did the Antonines, or Theodosius, or Charlemagne, or Frederic II.? The Emperor of Russia may emancipate serfs from a dictate of humanity, but he did not give them political power, for fear that it might be turned against the throne. The sovereign people of America may give political equality to their old slaves, and invite them to share in the legislation of great interests: it is in accordance with that theory of abstract rights which Rousseau, the creator of the French Revolution, propounded, — which gospel of rights was accepted by Jefferson and Franklin. The monarchs of the world have their own opinions about the political rights of those whom they deem ignorant or inexperienced.

Instead of proceeding to enlarge the bounds of popular liberties, they prefer to fall back on established duties. Elizabeth had this preference; but she did not attempt to take away what liberties the people already had. In encouraging the principles of the Reformation, she became their protector against Catholic priests and feudal nobles.

It is not quite just to stigmatize the government of Elizabeth as a despotism. A despotism is a régime supported by military force, based on an army, with power to tax the people without their consent, — like the old rule of the Cæsars, like that of Louis XIV. and Peter the Great, and even of Napoleon. Now, Elizabeth never had a standing army of any size. When the country was threatened by Spain, she threw herself into the arms of the militia, — upon the patriotism and generosity of her people. Nor could she tax the people without the consent of Parliament, — which by a fiction was supposed to represent the people, while in reality it only represented the wealthy classes. Parliament possessed the power to cripple her, and was far less generous to her than it was to Queen Victoria. She was headed off both by the nobles and by the representatives of the wealthy, powerful, and aristocratic Commons. She had great prerogatives and great private wealth, palaces, parks, and arbitrary courts; but she could not go against the laws of the

realm without endangering her throne, — which she was wise enough and strong enough to keep, in spite of all her enemies both at home and abroad. Had she been a man, she might have turned out a tyrant and a usurper: she might have increased the royal prerogatives, like Richelieu; she might have made wars, like Louis XIV.; she might have ground down the people, like her successor James. But she understood the limits of her power, and did not seek to go beyond; thereby proving herself as wise as she was mighty.

By most historical writers Elizabeth is severely censured for the execution of Mary Queen of Scots, and I think with justice. I am not making a special plea in favor of Elizabeth, — hiding her defects and exaggerating her virtues, — but simply seeking to present her character and deeds according to the verdict of enlightened ages. It was a cruel and repulsive act to take away the life of a relative and a woman and a queen, under any pretence whatever, unless the sparing of her life would endanger the security of the sovereign and the peace of the realm. Mary was the granddaughter of Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII., and was the lawful successor of Mary, the eldest daughter of Henry VIII. On the principle of legitimacy, she had a title to the throne superior to Elizabeth herself, and the succession of princes has ever been determined by this. But Mary was a Catholic, to say

nothing of her levities or crimes, and had been excluded by the nation for that very reason. If there was injustice done to her, it was in not allowing her claim to succeed Mary. That she felt that Elizabeth was a usurper, and that the English throne belonged by right to her, I do not doubt. It was natural that she should seek to regain her rights. If she should survive Elizabeth, her claims as the rightful successor could not be well set aside. That in view of these facts Elizabeth was jealous of Mary I do not doubt; and that this jealousy was one great cause of her hostility is probable.

The execution of Mary Stuart because she was a Catholic, or because she excited fear or jealousy, is utterly indefensible. All that the English nation had a right to do was to set her succession aside because she was a Catholic, and would undo the work of the Reformation. She had a right to her religion; and the nation also had a right to prevent its religion from being overturned or jeopardized. I do not believe, however, that Mary's life endangered either the throne or the religion of England, so long as she was merely Queen of Scotland; hence I look upon her captivity as cruel, and her death as a crime. She was destroyed as the male children of the Hebrews were destroyed by Pharaoh, as a sultan murders his nephews, — from fear; from a cold and cruel state policy, against all the higher laws of morality.

The crime of Elizabeth doubtless has palliations. She was urged by her ministers and by the Protestant part of the nation to commit this great wrong, on the plea of necessity, to secure the throne against a Catholic successor, and the nation from embarrassments, plots, and rebellions. It is an undoubted fact that Mary, even after her imprisonment in England, was engaged in perpetual intrigues; that she was leagued with Jesuits and hostile powers, and kept Elizabeth in continual irritation and the nation in constant alarm. And it is probable that had she succeeded Elizabeth, she would have destroyed all that was dear to the English heart, — that glorious Reformation, effected by so many labors and sacrifices. Therefore she was immolated to the spirit of the times, for reasons of expediency and apparent state necessity. That she conspired against the government of Elizabeth, and possibly against her life, was generally supposed; that she was a bitter enemy cannot be questioned. How far Elizabeth can be exculpated on the principle of self-defence cannot well be ascertained. Scotch historians do not generally accept the reputed facts of Mary's guilt. But if she sought the life of Elizabeth, and was likely to attain so bloody an end, — as was generally feared, — then Elizabeth has great excuses for having sanctioned the death of her rival.

So the beautiful and interesting Mary dies a martyr

After the painting in the Gallery of Versailles, by an unknown master, School of Clouet

MARY STUART

to her cause, — a victim of royal and national jealousy, paying the penalty for alleged crimes against the state and throne. Had Elizabeth herself, during the life of her sister Mary, been guilty of half they proved against the Queen of Scots, she would have been most summarily executed. But Elizabeth was wise and prudent, and waited for her time. Mary Stuart was imprudent and rash. Her character, in spite of her fascinations and accomplishments, was full of follies, infidelities, and duplicities. She is supposed to have been an adulteress and a murderess. She was unfortunate in her administration of Scotland. She was ruled by wicked favorites and foreign influence. She was not patriotic, or lofty, or earnest. She did what she could to root out Protestantism in Scotland, and kept her own realm in constant trouble. She had winning manners and graceful accomplishments; she was doubtless an intellectual woman; she had courage, presence of mind, tact, intelligence; she could ride and dance well: but with these accomplishments she had qualities which made her dangerous and odious. If she had not been executed, she would have been execrated. But her sufferings and unfortunate death appeal to the heart of the world, and I would not fight against popular affections and sympathies. Though she committed great crimes and follies, and was supposed to be dangerous to the religion and

liberties of England, she died a martyr, — as Charles I. died, and Louis XVI., — the victim of great necessities and great animosities.

The execution of Essex is another of the popular rather than serious charges against Elizabeth. He had been her favorite; he was a generous, gifted, and accomplished man, — therefore, it is argued, he ought to have been spared. But he was caught with arms in his hands. He was a traitor to the throne which enriched him and the nation which flattered him. He was at the head of foolish rebellion, and therefore he died, — died like Montmorency in the reign of Henry IV., like Bassompierre, like Norfolk and Northumberland, because he had committed high-treason and defied the laws. Why should Elizabeth spare such a culprit? No former friendship, no chivalrous qualities, no array of past services, ever can offset the crime of treason and rebellion, especially in unsettled times; and Elizabeth would have been worse than weak had she spared so great a criminal, both according to the laws and precedents of England and the verdict of enlightened civilization. We may compassionate the fate of Essex; but he was rash, giddy, and irritated, and we feel that he deserved his punishment.

The other charges brought against Elizabeth pertain to her as a woman rather than a sovereign. They say that she was artful, dissembling, parsimonious, jealous,

haughty, and masculine. Very likely, — and what then? Who claimed that she was perfect, any more than other great sovereigns whom on the whole we praise? These faults, too, may have been the result of her circumstances, rather than native traits of character. Surrounded with spies and enemies, she was obliged to hide her thoughts and her plans. Irritated by treason and rebellions, she may have given vent to unseemly anger. Flattered beyond all example, she may have been vain and ostentatious. Possessed of great powers, she may have been arbitrary. Crippled by Parliament, she may have nursed her resources. Compelled to give to everything, she may have been parsimonious. Slandered by her enemies, she may have been resentful. Annoyed by wrangling sects, she may have too strenuously paraded her high-church principles.

But all these things we lose sight of in the undoubted virtues, abilities, and services of this great Queen. Historians have other work than to pick out spots on the sun. The dark spot, if there is one upon Elizabeth's character, was her coquetry in private life. It is impossible to tell whether or not she exceeded the bounds of womanly virtue. She was probably slandered and vilified by treacherous, gossiping ambassadors, who were foes to her person and her kingdom, and who made as ugly reports of her as possible to their royal masters. I am sorry that these malicious

accusations have been raked out of the ashes of the past by modern historians, whose literary fame rests on bringing to light what is *new* rather than what is *true*. The character of a woman and a queen so admired and honored in her day, should be sacred from the stings of sensational writers who poison their darts from the archives of bitter foreign enemies.

The gallant men of genius whom Elizabeth admired and honored — as a bright and intellectual woman naturally would, especially when deprived of the felicities of wedded life — never presumed, I have charity to believe, beyond an undignified partiality and an admiring friendship. When Essex stood highest in her favor, she was nearly seventy years of age. There are no undoubted facts which criminate her, — nothing but gossip and the malice of foreign spies. What a contrast her private life was to that of her mother Anne Boleyn, or to that of Mary, Queen of Scots, or even to that of the great Catherine of Russia! She had, indeed, great foibles and weaknesses. She was inordinately fond of dress; she was sensitive to her own good looks; she was jealous of pretty women; she was vain, and susceptible to flattery; she was irritable when crossed; she gave way to sallies of petulance and anger; she occasionally used language unbecoming her station and authority; she could dissimulate and hide her thoughts: but her nature was not hypocritical, or false, or mean.

She was just, honest, and straightforward in her ordinary dealings; she was patriotic, enlightened, and magnanimous; she loved learning and learned men; she had at heart the best interests of her subjects; she was true to her cause. Surely these great virtues, which it is universally admitted she possessed, should more than balance her defects and weaknesses. See how tender-hearted she was when required to sign death-warrants, and what grief she manifested when Essex proved unworthy of her friendship! See her love of children, her readiness of sympathy, her fondness for society, — all feminine qualities in a woman who is stigmatized as masculine, as she perhaps was in her mental structure, in her habits of command, and aptitude for business: a strong-minded woman at the worst, yet such a woman as was needed on a throne, especially in stormy times and in a rude state of society.

And when we pass from her private character to her public services, by which the great are judged, how exalted her claims to the world's regard! Where do we find a greater or a better queen? Contrast her with other female sovereigns, — with Isabella, who with all her virtues favored the Inquisition; with her sister Mary, who kindled the fires of Smithfield; with Catherine de Médicis, who sounded the tocsin of St. Bartholomew; with Mary of Scotland, who was a partner in the murder of her husband; with Anne of Austria,

who ruled through Italian favorites; with Christiana of Sweden, who scandalized Europe by her indecent eccentricities; with Anne of Great Britain, ruled by the Duchess of Marlborough. There are only two great sovereigns with whom she can be compared, — Catherine II. of Russia, and Maria Theresa of Germany, illustrious, like Elizabeth, for courage and ability. But Catherine was the slave of infamous passions, and Maria Theresa was a party to the partition of Poland. Compared with these even, the English queen appears immeasurably superior; they may have wielded more power, but their moral influence was less. It is not the greatness of a country which gives greatness to its exalted characters. Washington ruled our empire in its infancy; and Buchanan, with all its majestic resources, — yet who is dearest to the heart of the world? No countries ever produced greater benefactors than Palestine and Greece, when their limits were scarcely equal to one of our States. The fame of Burleigh burns brighter than that of the most powerful of modern statesmen. The names of Alexander Hamilton and Daniel Webster may outshine the glories of any statesmen who shall arise in this great country for a hundred years to come. Elizabeth ruled a little island; but her memory and deeds are as immortal as the fame of Pericles or Marcus Aurelius.

And the fame of England's great queen rests on the

From the painting by Paul Delaroche

LAST MOMENTS OF QUEEN ELIZABETH

influence which radiated from her character, as well as upon the power she wielded with so much wisdom and ability. Influence is greater than power in the lapse of ages. Politicians may wield power for a time; but the great statesmen, like Burke and Canning, live in their ideas. Warriors and kings, and ministers of kings, have power; but poets and philosophers have influence, for their ideas go coursing round the world until they have changed governments and institutions for better or for worse, — like those of Paul, of Socrates, of Augustine, of Dante, of Shakspeare, of Bacon, yea, of Rousseau. Some few favored rulers and leaders of men have had both power and influence, like Moses, Alfred, and Washington; and Elizabeth belongs to this class. Her influence was for good, and it permeated English life and society, like that of Victoria, whose power was small.

As a queen, however, more than a woman, Elizabeth is one of the great names of history. I have some respect for the critical verdict of Francis Bacon, the greatest man of his age, — if we except Shakspeare, — and one of the greatest men in the history of all nations. What does he say? He knew her well, perhaps as well as any modern historian. He says: —

"She was a princess, that, if Plutarch were now alive to write by parables, it would puzzle him to find her equal

among women. She was endowed with learning most singular and rare; and as for her government, I do affirm that England never had forty-five years of better times, and this, not through the calmness of the season, but the wisdom of her regimes. When we consider the establishment of religion, and the constant peace of the country, the good administration of justice, the flourishing state of learning, the increase of wealth, and the general prosperity, amid differences in religion, the troubles of neighboring nations, the ambition of Spain, and the opposition of Rome, I could not have chosen a more remarkable combination of learning in the prince with felicity of the people."

I can add nothing to this comprehensive verdict: it covers the whole ground. So that for virtues and abilities, in spite of all defects, I challenge attention to this virgin queen. I love to dwell on her courage, her fortitude, her prudence, her wisdom, her patriotism, her magnanimity, her executive ability, and, more, on the exalted services she rendered to her country and to civilization. These invest her name with a halo of glory which shall blaze through all the ages, even as the great men who surrounded her throne have made her name illustrious.

The Elizabethan era is justly regarded as the brightest in English history; not for the number of its great men, or the magnificence of its great enterprises, or the triumphs of its great discoveries and inventions, but

because there were then born the great ideas which constitute the strength and beauty of our proud civilization, and because then the grandest questions which pertain to religion, government, literature, and social life were first agitated, with the freshness and earnestness of a revolutionary age. The men of that period were a constellation of original thinkers. We still point with admiration to the political wisdom of Cecil, to the sagacity of Walsingham, to the varied accomplishments of Raleigh, to the chivalrous graces of Sidney, to the bravery of Hawkins and Nottingham, to the bold enterprises of Drake and Frobisher, to the mercantile integrity and financial skill of Gresham, to the comprehensive intellect of Parker, to the scholarship of Ascham, to the eloquence of Jewel, to the profundity of Hooker, to the vast attainments and original genius of Bacon, to the rich fancy of Spenser, to the almost inspired insight of Shakspeare, towering above all the poets of ancient and of modern times, as fresh to-day as he was three hundred years ago, the greatest miracle of intellect that perhaps has ever adorned the world. By all these illustrious men Queen Elizabeth was honored and beloved. All received no small share of their renown from her glorious appreciation; all were proud to revolve around her as a central sun, giving life and growth to every great enterprise in her day, and shedding a light which shall gladden unborn generations.

It is something that a woman has earned such a fame, and in a sphere which has been supposed to belong to man alone. And if men shall here and there be found to decry her greatness, let no woman be found who shall seek to dethrone her from her lofty pedestal; for in so doing she unwittingly becomes a detractor from that womanly greatness in which we should all rejoice, and which thus far has so seldom been seen in exalted stations. For my part, the more I study history the more I reverence this great sovereign; and I am proud that such a woman has lived and reigned and died in honor.

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HENRY OF NAVARRE.

A. D. 1553–1610.

THE HUGUENOTS.

HENRY OF NAVARRE.

THE HUGUENOTS.

IN this lecture I shall confine myself principally to the connection of Henry IV. with that memorable movement which came near making France a Protestant country. He is identified with the Huguenots, and it is the struggles of the Huguenots which I wish chiefly to present. I know he was also a great king, the first of the Bourbon dynasty, whose heroism in war was equalled only by his enlightened zeal in the civilization of France, — a king who more deeply impressed himself upon the affections of the nation than any monarch since Saint Louis, and who, had he lived to execute his schemes, would have raised France to the highest pitch of glory. Nor do I forget, that, although he fought for a great cause, and reigned with great wisdom and ability, and thus rendered important services to his country, he was a man of great defects of character, stained with those peculiar vices which disgraced most of the Bourbon kings, especially Louis XIV. and

Louis XV.; that his court was the scene of female gallantries and intrigues, and that he was more under the influence of women than was good for the welfare of his country or his own reputation. But the limits of this lecture will not permit me to dwell on his acts as a monarch, or on his statesmanship, his services, or his personal defects of character. I am obliged, from the magnitude of my subject, and from the necessity of giving it unity and interest, to confine myself to him as a leader of the Huguenots alone. It is not Henry himself that I would consider, so much as the struggles of the brave men associated with him, more or less intimately, in their attempt to secure religious liberty in the sixteenth century.

The sixteenth century! What a great era that was in comparison with the preceding centuries since Christianity was declared! From a religious and heroic point of view it was immeasurably a greater period than the nineteenth century, which has been marked chiefly for the triumphs of science, material progress, and social and political reforms. But in earnestness, in moral grandeur, and in discussions which pertain to the health and life of nations, the sixteenth century was greater than our own. Then began all sorts of inquiries about Nature and about mind, about revelation and Providence, about liberty of worship and freedom of thought; all of which were discussed with an enthu-

siasm and patience and boldness and originality to which our own times furnish no parallel. And united with this fresh and original agitation of great ideas was a heroism in action which no age of the world has equalled. Men risked their fortunes and their lives in defence of those principles which have made the enjoyment of them in our times the greatest blessing we possess. It was a new spirit that had arisen in our world to break the fetters which centuries of fraud and superstition and injustice had forged, — a spirit scornful of old authorities, yet not sceptical, with disgust of the past and hope for the future, penetrating even the hamlets of the poor, and kindling the enthusiasm of princes and nobles, producing learned men in every country of Europe, whose original investigations should put to the blush the commentators and compilers of this age of religious mediocrity and disguised infidelity. Such intellectual giants in the field of religious inquiry had not appeared since the Fathers of the Church combated the paganism of the Roman world, and will not probably appear again until the cycle of changes is completed in the domain of theological thought, and men are forced to meet the enemies of divine revelation marshalled in such overwhelming array that there will be a necessity for reformers, called out by a special Providence to fight battles, — as I regard Luther and Calvin and Knox. The great difference between the

sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, outside of material aspects, is that the former recognized the majesty of God, and the latter the majesty of man. Both centuries believed in progress; but the sixteenth century traced this progress to first, and the nineteenth to second, causes. The sixteenth believed that human improvement was owing directly to special divine grace, and the nineteenth believes in the necessary development of mankind. The school of the sixteenth century was spiritual, that of the nineteenth is material; the former looked to heaven, the latter looks to earth. The sixteenth regarded this world as a mere preparation for the next, and the nineteenth looks upon this world as the future scene of indefinite and completed bliss. The sixteenth century attacked the ancient, the nineteenth attacks the eternal. The sixteenth destroyed, but reconstructed; the nineteenth also destroys, but would substitute nothing instead. The sixteenth reminds us of audacious youth, still clinging to parental authority; the nineteenth reminds us of cynical and irreverent old age, believing in nothing but the triumphs of science and art, and shaking off the doctrines of the ages as exploded superstitions.

The sixteenth century was marked not only by intensely earnest religious inquiries, but by great civil and social disorders, — showing a transition period of society from the slaveries and discomforts of the feudal

ages to the liberty and comforts of highly civilized life. In the midst of religious enthusiasm we see tumults, insurrections, terrible animosities, and cruel intolerance. War was associated with inhuman atrocities, and the acceptance of the reformed faith was followed by bitter and heartless persecution. The feudal system had received a shock from standing armies and the invention of gunpowder and the central authority of kings, but it was not demolished. The nobles still continued to enjoy their social and political distinctions, the peasantry were ground down by unequal laws, and the nobles were as arrogant and quarrelsome as the people were oppressed by unjust distinctions. They were still followed by their armed retainers, and had almost unlimited jurisdiction in their respective governments. Even the higher clergy gloried in feudal inequalities, and were selected from the noble classes. The people were not powerful enough to make combinations and extort their rights, unless they followed the standards of military chieftains, arrayed perhaps against the crown and against the parliaments. We see no popular, independent political movements; even the people, like all classes above them, were firm and enthusiastic in their religious convictions.

The commanding intellect at that time in Europe was John Calvin (a Frenchman, but a citizen of Geneva), whom we have already seen to be a man of

marvellous precocity of genius and astonishing logical powers, combined with the most exhaustive erudition on all theological subjects. His admirers claim a distinct and logical connection between his theology and civil liberty itself. I confess I cannot see this. There was nothing democratic about Calvin. He ruled indeed at Geneva as Savonarola did in Florence, but he did not have as liberal ideas as the Florentine reformer about the political liberties of the people. He made his faith the dearest thing a man could have, to be defended unto death in the face of the most unrelenting persecution. It was the tenacity to defend the reformed doctrines, of which, next to Luther, Calvin was the greatest champion, which kindled opposition to civil rulers. And it was opposition to civil rulers who proved themselves tyrants which led to the struggle for civil liberty; not democratic ideas of right. These may have been the sequence of agitations and wars, but not their animating cause, — like the ideas of Rousseau on the French revolutionists. The original Puritans were not democratic; the Presbyterians of Scotland were not, even when Cromwell led the armies, but not the people, of England. The Huguenots had no aspirations for civil rights; they only aspired for the right of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience. There was nothing popular in their notions of government when Henry IV. headed the forces of

the Huguenots; he only aimed at the recognition of religious rights. The Huguenots never rallied around popular leaders, but rather under the standards of princes and nobles fighting for the right of worshipping God according to the dictation or ideas of Calvin. They would preserve their schools, their churches, their consistories, and their synods; they would be unmolested in their religious worship.

Now, at the time when Henry IV. was born, in the year 1553, when Henry II. was King of France and Edward VI. was King of England, the ideas of the Reformation, and especially the doctrines of Calvin, had taken a deep and wide hold of the French people. The Calvinists, as they were called, were a powerful party; in some parts of France they were in a majority. More than a third of the whole population had enthusiastically accepted the reformed doctrines. They were in a fair way toward triumph; they had great leaders among the highest of the nobility. But they were bitterly hated by the king and the princes of the house of Valois, and especially by the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, — the most powerful families in France, — because they meditated to overturn, not the throne, but the old established religion. The Pope instigated the most violent proceedings; so did the King of Spain. It was resolved to suppress the hated doctrines. The enemies of the Calvinists resorted

to intrigues and assassinations; they began a furious persecution, as they held in their hands the chief political power. Injustice succeeded injustice, and outrage followed outrage. During the whole reigns of the Valois Princes, treachery, assassinations, and bloody executions marked the history of France. Royal edicts forbid even the private assemblies of the Huguenots, on pain of death. They were not merely persecuted but calumniated. There was no crime which was not imputed to them, even that of sacrificing little children; so that the passions of the people were aroused against them, and they were so maltreated that all security was at an end. From a condition of hopeful progress, they were forced back and beaten down. Their condition became insupportable. There was no alternative but desperate resistance or martyrdom, for the complete suppression of Protestantism was resolved upon, on the part of the government. The higher clergy, the parliaments, the University of Paris, and the greater part of the old nobility supported the court, and each successive Prince of the house of Valois adopted more rigorous measures than his predecessor. Henry II. was more severe than Francis I.; and Francis II. was more implacable than Henry II., who was killed at a tournament in 1559. Francis II., a feeble prince, was completely ruled by his mother, Catherine de Médicis, an incarnated fiend of cruelty and treachery, though a woman of pleasing

manners and graceful accomplishments, — like Mary of Scotland, but without her levities. Under her influence persecution assumed a form which was truly diabolical. The Huguenots, although supported by the King of Navarre, the Prince of Condé, Coligny (Admiral of France), his brother the Seigneur d' Andelot, the Count of Montgomery, the Duke of Bouillon, the Duke of Soubise, all of whom were nobles of high rank, were in danger of being absolutely crushed, and were on the brink of despair. What if a third part of the people belonged to their ranks, when the whole power of the crown and a great majority of the nobles were against them; and these supported by the Pope and clergy, and stimulated to ferocity by the Jesuits, then becoming formidable?

At last the Huguenots resolved to organize and arm in their own defence, for there is a time when submission ceases to be a virtue. If ever a people had cause for resistance it was this persecuted people. They did not rise up against their persecutors with the hope of overturning the throne, or producing a change of dynasties, or gaining constitutional liberty, or becoming a political power hostile to the crown, like the Puritans under Cromwell or Hampden, but simply to preserve what to them was more precious than life. All that they demanded was a toleration of their religion; and as their religion was dearer to them than life, they were

ready to undergo any sacrifices. Their resistance was more formidable than was anticipated; they got possession of cities and fortresses, and were able to defy the whole power of the crown. It was found impossible to suppress a people who fought with so much heroism, and who defied every combination. So truces and treaties were made with them, by which their religious rights were guaranteed. But these treaties were perpetually broken, for treachery is no sin with religious persecutors, since "the end justified the means."

This Huguenotic contest, attended with so much vicissitude, alternate defeat and victory, and stained by horrid atrocities, was at its height when Henry IV. was a boy, and had no thought of ever being King of France. His father, Antoine de Bourbon, although King of Navarre and a prince of the blood, being a lineal descendant from Saint Louis, was really only a great noble, not so powerful as the Duke of Guise or the Duke of Montmorency; and even he, a leader of the rebellion, was finally won over to the court party by the seductions brought to bear on him by Roman priests. He was either bribed or intimidated, and disgracefully abjured the cause for which he at first gallantly fought. He died from a wound he received at the siege of Rouen, while commanding one of the armies of Charles IX., who succeeded his brother Francis II., in 1560.

The mother of the young prince, destined afterwards to be so famous, was one of the most celebrated women of history, — Jeanne D'Albret, niece of Francis I.; a woman who was equally extolled by men of letters and Calvinistic divines. She was as beautiful as she was good; at her castle in Pau, the capital of her hereditary kingdom of Navarre, she diffused a magnificent hospitality, especially to scholars and the lights of the reformed doctrines. Her kingdom was small, and was politically unimportant; but she was a sovereign princess nevertheless. The management of the young prince, her son, was most admirable, but unusual. He was delicate and sickly as an infant, and reared with difficulty; but, though a prince, he was fed on the simplest food, and exposed to hardships like the sons of peasants; he was allowed to run bareheaded and barefooted, exposed to heat and rain, in order to strengthen his constitution. Amid the hills at the base of the Pyrenees, in the company of peasants' children, he thus acquired simple and natural manners, and accustomed himself to fatigues and dangers. He was educated in the reformed doctrines, but was more distinguished as a boy for his chivalric graces, physical beauty, and manly sports than for seriousness of character or a religious life. He grew up a Protestant, from education rather than conviction. At twelve, in the year 1565, he was intrusted by his mother, the Queen of

Navarre, to the care of his uncle, the Prince of Condé, and, on his death, to Admiral Coligny, the acknowledged leader of the Protestants. He thus witnessed many bloody battles before he was old enough to be intrusted with command. At eighteen he was affianced to Marguerite de Valois, sister of Charles IX., in spite of differences of religion.

It was amid the nuptial festivities of the young King of Navarre, — his mother had died the year before, — when all the prominent leaders of the Protestants were enticed to Paris, that preparations were made for the blackest crime in the annals of civilized nations, — even the treacherous and hideous massacre of St. Bartholomew, perpetrated by Charles IX., who was incited to it by his mother, the ever-infamous Catherine de Médicis, and the Duke of Guise.

The Protestants, under the Prince of Condé and Admiral Coligny, had fought so bravely and so successfully in defence of their cause that all hope of subduing them in the field was given up. The bloody battles of Montcontour, of St. Denis, and of Jarnac had proved how stubbornly the Huguenots would fight; while their possession of such strong fortresses as Montauban and La Rochelle, deemed impregnable, showed that they could not easily be subdued. Although the Prince of Condé had been slain at the battle of Jarnac, this great misfortune to the Protestants was more

than balanced by the assassination of the great Duke of Guise, the ablest general and leader of the Catholics. So when all hope had vanished of exterminating the Huguenots in open warfare, a deceitful peace was made; and their leaders were decoyed to Paris, in order to accomplish, in one foul sweep, by wholesale murder, the diabolical design.

The Huguenot leaders were completely deceived. Old Admiral Coligny, with his deeper insight, hesitated to put himself into the power of a bigoted and persecuting monarch; but Charles IX. pledged his word for his safety, and in an age when chivalry was not extinguished, his promise was accepted. Who could believe that his word of honor would be broken, or that he, a king, could commit such an outrageous and unprecedented crime? But what oath, what promise, what law can bind a man who is a slave of religious bigotry, when his church requires a bloody and a cruel act? The end seemed to justify any means. I would not fix the stain of that infamous crime exclusively on the Jesuits, or on the Pope, or on the councillors of the King, or on his mother. I will not say that it was even exclusively a Church movement: it may have been equally an apparent State necessity. A Protestant prince might mount the throne of France, and with him, perhaps, the ascendency of Protestantism, or at least its protection. Such a catastrophe, as it seemed to the

councillors of Charles IX., must somehow be averted. How could it be averted otherwise than by the assassination of Henry himself, and his cousin Condé, and the brave old admiral, as powerful as Guise, as courageous as Du Gueslin, and as pious as Godfrey? And then, when these leaders were removed, and all the Protestants in Paris were murdered, who would remain to continue the contest, and what Protestant prince could hope to mount the throne? But whoever was directly responsible for the crime, and whatever may have been the motives for it, still it was committed. The first victim was Coligny himself, and the slaughter of sixty thousand persons followed in Paris and the provinces. The Admiral Coligny, Marquis of Chatillon, was one of the finest characters in all history, — brave, honest, truthful, sincere, with deep religious convictions, and great ability as a general. No Englishman in the sixteenth century can be compared with him for influence, heroism, and virtue combined. It was deemed necessary to remove this illustrious man, not because he was personally obnoxious, but because he was the leader of the Protestant party.

It is said that as the fatal hour approached to give the signal for the meditated massacre, Aug. 24, 1572, the King appeared irresolute and disheartened. Though cruel, perfidious, and weak, he shrank from committing such a gigantic crime, and this too in the face of his

After the painting by Ed. Debat-Ponsan

THE MORNING AFTER THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW

royal promises. But there was one person whom no dangers appalled, and whose icy soul could be moved by no compassion and no voice of conscience. At midnight, Catherine entered the chamber of her irresolute son, in the Louvre, on whose brow horror was already stamped, and whose frame quivered with troubled chills. Coloring the crime with the usual sophistries of all religious and political persecution, that the end justifies the means, and stigmatizing him as a coward, she at last extorted from his quivering lips the fatal order; and immediately the tocsin of death sounded from the great bell of the church of St. Germain de Auxerrois. At once the slaughter commenced in every corner of Paris, so well were the horrid measures concerted. Screams of despair were mingled with shouts of vengeance; the cries of the murdered were added to the imprecations of the murderers; the streets flowed with blood, the dead rained from the windows, the Seine became purple. Men, women, and children were seen flying in every direction, pursued by soldiers, who were told that an insurrection of Protestants had broken out. No sex or age or dignity was spared, no retreat afforded a shelter, not even the churches of the Catholics. Neither Alaric nor Attila ever inflicted such barbarities. No besieged city taken by assault ever saw such wanton butcheries, except possibly Jerusalem when taken by Titus or Godfrey, or

Magdeburg when taken by Tilly. And as the bright summer sun illuminated the city on a Sunday morning the massacre had but just begun; nor for three days and three nights did the slaughter abate. A vulgar butcher appeared before the King and boasted he had slain one hundred and fifty persons with his own hand in a single night. For seven days was Paris the scene of disgraceful murder and pillage and violence. Men might be seen stabbing little infants, and even children were known to slaughter their companions. Nor was there any escape from these atrocities; the very altars which had once protected Christians from pagans were polluted by Catholic executioners. Ladies jested with unfeeling mirth over the dead bodies of murdered Protestants. The very worst horrors of which the mind could conceive were perpetrated in the name of religion. And then, when no more victims remained, the King and his court and his clergy proceeded in solemn procession to the cathedral church of Notre Dame, amidst hymns of praise, to return thanks to God for the deliverance of France from men who had sought only the privilege of worshipping Him according to their consciences!

Nor did the bloody work stop here; orders were sent by the Government to every city and town of France to execute the like barbarities. The utter extermination of the Protestants was resolved upon throughout the

country. The slaughter was begun in treachery and was continued in the most heartless cruelty. When the news of it reached Rome, the Holy Father the Pope caused a medal to be struck in commemoration of the event, illuminated his capital, ordained general rejoicings, as if for some signal victory over the Turks; and, assisted by his cardinals and clergy, marched in glad procession to St. Peter's Church, and offered up a solemn Te Deum for this vile and treacherous slaughter of sixty thousand Protestants.

In former lectures I have passed rapidly and imperfectly over this awful crime, not wishing to stimulate passions which should be buried, and thinking it was more the fault of the age than of Catholic bigots; but I now present it in its naked deformity, to be true to history, and to show how cruel is religious intolerance, confirmed by the history of other inhumanities in the Catholic Church, — by the persecution of Dominican monks, by the slaughter of the Albigenses, by inquisitions, gunpowder plots, the cruelties of Alva, and that trail of blood which has marked the fairest portions of Europe by the hostilities of the Church of Rome in its struggles to suppress Protestant opinions. I mention it to recall the fact that Protestantism has never been stained by such a crime. I mention it to invoke gratitude that such a misguided zeal has passed away and is never likely to return. Catholic

historians do not pretend to deny the horrid facts, but ascribe the massacre to political animosities rather than religious, — a lame and impotent defence of their persecuting Church in the sixteenth century.

But this atrocity had such a demoniacal blackness and perfidy about it that it filled the whole Protestant world with grief and indignation, especially England, and had only the effect of binding together the Huguenots in a solid phalanx of warriors, resolved on making no peace with their perfidious enemies until their religious liberties were guaranteed. Though decimated, they were not destroyed; for the provincial governors and rural magistrates generally refused to execute the royal decrees, — their hearts were moved with pity. The slaughter was not universal, and Henry himself had escaped, his life being spared on condition of his becoming a Catholic, which as a matter of form he did.

Nevertheless, all Protestant eyes were now directed to him as their leader, since Coligny had perished by daggers, and Condé on the field of battle. Henry was still a young man, only twenty years of age, but able, intrepid, and wise. He and his cousin, the younger Condé, were still held as hostages, while the Huguenots again rallied and retired to their strong fortress of La Rochelle. Their last hopes centred in this fortress, defended by only fifteen thousand men, under the brave La Noue, while the royal army embraced

the flower of the French nobility, commanded by the Dukes of Anjou and Alençon. But these royal dukes were compelled to raise the siege, 1573, with a loss of forty thousand men. I regard the successful defence of this fortress, at this crisis, as the most fortunate event in the whole Huguenot contest, since it enabled the Huguenots to make a stand against the whole power of the monarchs. It did not give them victory, but gave them a place to rally; and it proclaimed the fact that the contest would not end until the Protestants had achieved their liberties or were utterly annihilated.

Soon after this successful and glorious defence of La Rochelle, Charles IX. died, at the age of twenty-four, in awful agonies, — the victim of remorse and partial insanity, in the hours of which the horrors of St. Bartholomew were ever present to his excited imagination, and when he beheld wild faces of demons and murdered Huguenots rejoicing in his torments, and heard strange voices consigning his name to infamy and his body to those never-ending physical torments in which both Catholics and Protestants equally believed. His mother however remained cold, inflexible, and unmoved, — for when a woman falls under the grip of the Devil, then no man can equal her in shamelessness and reckless sin.

Charles IX. was succeeded, in 1574, by his brother the King of Poland, under the name of Henry III.,

who was equally under the control of his mother Catherine.

Two years afterward the King of Navarre succeeded in making his escape, and joined the Huguenot army at Tours. He was now twenty-three. He astonished the whole kingdom by his courage and intrepidity, — winning the hearts of the soldiers, and uniting them by strict military discipline. His friend and counsellor was Rosny, afterwards Duke of Sully, to whose wise counsels his future success may be in a great measure traced. Fortunate is the prince who will listen to frank and disagreeable advice; and that was one of the virtues of Henry, — a magnanimity which has seldom been equalled by generals.

The Huguenots were now able to make a stand in the open country, partly from additions to their numbers and partly from the mistakes and frivolities of Henry III., who alienated stern Catholics and his best friends. It was then that Bouillon, father of the illustrious Turenne, joined the standard of Henry of Navarre. Soon after this, Henry became heir-apparent of the French throne, by the death of the Duke of Alençon, 1584. Only the King, Henry III., a man without children, and the last of the male line of the house of Valois, stood between Henry of Navarre and the throne. The possibility that he, a Protestant, might wield the sceptre of Saint Louis, his ancestor, increased the bitterness

and animosity of the Catholics. All the forces which the Government could raise were now arrayed against him and his party. The Pope, Sixtus V., in a papal bull, took away his hereditary rights; but fortune favored him. The Duke of Guise, who aspired to the throne, was himself assassinated, as his father had been; and now, by the orders of his jealous sovereign, his brother, the Cardinal of Guise, nephew of the Cardinal of Lorraine, — a man who held three archbishoprics, six bishoprics, and five abbeys, and these the richest in the kingdom, — shared the same fate. And Providence removed also, soon after, the most guilty and wicked of all the perpetrators of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, even Catherine de Médicis, — who would be regarded as a female monster, an incarnate fiend, a Messalina, or a Fredegunda, had she not been beautiful, with pleasing and gracious manners, a great fondness for society and music and poetry and art, — the most accomplished woman of her day, and so attractive as to be compared by the poets of her court to Aurora and Venus. Her life only shows how much heartlessness, cruelty, malignity, envy, and selfishness may be concealed by the mask of beauty and agreeable manners and artistic accomplishments.

The bloody battle of Coutras enabled Henry of Navarre to take a stand against the Catholics; but after the death of Henry III. by assassination, in 1589, his

struggles for the next five years were more to secure his hereditary rights as King of France than to lead the Huguenots to victory as a religious body. It might have been better for them had Henry remained the head of their party rather than become King of France, since he might not have afterwards deserted them. But there was really no hope of the Huguenots gaining a political ascendency at any time; they composed but a third part of the nation; their only hope was to secure their religious liberties.

The most brilliant part of the military career of Henry IV. was when he struggled for his throne, supported of course by the Huguenots, and opposed by the whole Catholic party, the King of Spain, and the Pope of Rome. The Catholics, or the "Leaguers" as they were called, were led by the Duke of Mayenne. I need not describe the successes of Henry, until the battle of Ivry, March 14, 1590, made him really the monarch of France. On that eventful day both armies, having performed their devotions, were drawn out for action. Both armies knew that this battle would be decisive; and when all the arrangements were completed, Henry, completely covered with mail except his hands and head, mounted upon a great bay charger, galloped up and down the ranks, giving words of encouragement to his soldiers, and assuring them that he would either conquer or die. "If my standard fail you," said he,

"keep my plume in sight: you will always see it in the face of glory and honor." So saying, he put on his helmet, adorned with three white plumes, gave the order of battle, and, sword in hand, led the charge against the enemy. For some time the issue of the conflict was doubtful, for the forces were about equal; but at length victory inclined to the Protestants, who broke forth in shouts as Henry, covered with dust and blood, appeared at the head of the pursuing squadrons.

"Now, God be praised, the day is ours! Mayenne hath turned his rein,
D'Aumale hath cried for quarter, the Flemish count is slain.
Their ranks are breaking like thin clouds before a Biscay gale;
The field is heaped with bleeding steeds, and flags, and cloven mail;
And then we thought on vengeance, and all along our van
'Remember St. Bartholomew' was passed from man to man.
But out spake gentle Henry then: 'No Frenchman is my foe;
Down, down with every foreigner, but let your brethren go!'
Oh, was there ever such a knight, in friendship or in war,
As our sovereign lord, King Henry, the soldier of Navarre?"

The battle of Ivry, in which the forces of the League met with a complete overthrow, was followed by the siege of Paris, its memorable defence, and the arrival of the Duke of Parma, which compelled Henry to retire. Though he had gained a great victory, and received great accessions, he had to struggle four years longer, so determined were the Catholics; and he might have

had to fight a still longer time for his throne had he not taken the extraordinary resolution of abjuring his religion and cause. His final success was not doubtful, even as a Protestant king, since his title was undisputed; but he wearied of war. The peace of the kingdom and the security of the throne seemed to him a greater good than the triumph of the Huguenots. In that age great power was given to princes; he doubtless could have reigned as a Protestant prince had he persevered for a few years longer, and Protestantism would have been the established religion of France, as it was of England under Elizabeth. Henry as a Protestant king would have had no more enemies, or difficulties, or embarrassments than had the Virgin Queen, who on her accession found only one bishop willing to crown her. He had all the prestige of a conqueror, and was personally beloved, besides being a man of ability. His prime minister, Sully, was as able a man as Burleigh, and as good a Protestant; and the nation was enthusiastic. The Huguenots had deeper convictions, and were more logical in their creed, than the English Episcopalians. Leagued with England and Holland and Germany, France could have defied other Catholic powers, — could have been more powerful politically. Protestantism would have had the ascendency in Europe.

But it was not to be. To the mind of the King

From the painting by A P. E. Morlon

HENRY OF NAVARRE AND LA BELLE FOSSEUSE

he had nothing before him but protracted war, unless he became a Catholic; and as all the Huguenots ever struggled for was religious toleration, he would, as king, grant this toleration, and satisfy all parties. He either had no deep religious convictions, like Coligny and Dandelot, or he preferred an undisturbed crown to the ascendency of the religion for which he had so bravely fought. What matter, the tempter said, whether he reigned as a Catholic or Protestant monarch, so long as religious liberty was given to his subjects? Could he have reigned forever, could he have been assured of the toleration of his successors, this plea might have had some force; but it was the dictate of expediency, and no man can predict its ultimate results. He was not a religious man, although he was the leader of the Protestant party. He was far from being even moral in his social relations; still less had he the austerity of manners and habits that then characterized the Huguenots, for they were Calvinists and Presbyterians. He was gallant, brave, generous, magnanimous, and patriotic, — the model of a gentleman, the impersonation of chivalry, the charm of his friends, the idol of his army, the glory of his country; but there his virtues stopped. He was more of a statesman than the leader of a party. He wanted to see France united and happy and prosperous more than he wanted to see the ascendency of the Huguenots. He was now

not the King of Navarre, — a small country, scarcely thirty miles long, — but the King of France, ruling, as he aspired, from the Pyrenees to the Rhine. So it is not strange that he was governed by the principles of expediency, as most monarchs are. He wished to aggrandize his monarchy; that aim was dearer to him than the reformed faith. Coligny would have fought to the bitter end to secure the triumph of the Protestant cause; but Henry was not so lofty a man as the Admiral, — he had not his religious convictions, or stern virtues, or incorruptible life. He was a gallant monarch, an able general, a far-reaching statesman, yet fond of pleasure and of the glories of a court.

So Henry made up his mind to abjure his faith. On Sunday the 25th of July, 1593, clad not in helmet and cuirass and burnished steel, as at Ivry, but in a doublet of white satin, and a velvet coat ornamented with jewels and orders and golden fleurs de lis, and followed by cardinals and bishops and nobles, he entered the venerable Abbey of St. Denis, where reposed the ashes of all his predecessors, from Dagobert to Henry III., and was received into the bosom of the Catholic Church. A solemn Te Deum was then chanted by unnumbered priests; and the lofty pillars, the marble altars, the storied effigies, the purple windows, and the vaulted roof of that mediæval monument re-echoed to the music of those glorious anthems which were sung ages before

the most sainted of the kings of France was buried in the crypt. The partisans of the Catholic faith rejoiced that a heretic had returned to the fold of true believers; while the saddened, disappointed, humiliated members of the reformed religion felt, and confessed with shame, that their lauded protector had committed the most lamentable act of apostasy since the Emperor Julian abjured Christianity. It is true they palliated his conduct and remained faithful to his standard; but they felt he had committed a great blunder, if it were not a great crime. They knew that their cause was lost, — lost by him who had been their leader. Truly could they say, "Put not your trust in princes." To the irreligious, but worldly-wise, Henry had made a grand stroke of policy; had gained a kingdom well worth a Mass, had settled the disorders of forty years, had united both Catholics and Protestants in fealty to his crown, and was left at leisure to develop the resources of the nation, and lay a foundation for its future greatness.

I cannot here enumerate Henry IV.'s services to France, after the long civil war had closed; they were very great, and endeared him to the nation. He proved himself a wise and beneficent ruler; with the aid of the transcendent abilities of Sully, whose counsels he respected, he reduced taxation, founded schools and libraries, built hospitals, dug canals, repaired fortifi-

cations, restrained military license, punished turbulence and crime, introduced useful manufactures, encouraged industry, patronized learning, and sought to perpetuate peace. He aimed to be the father of his people, and he was the protector of the poor. His memorable saying is still dear to the hearts of Frenchmen: "I hope so to manage my kingdom that the poorest subject of it may eat meat every day in the week, and moreover be enabled to put a fowl into the pot every Sunday." I should like to point out his great acts and his enlightened policy, especially his effort to create a balance of power in Europe. The settlement of the finances and the establishment of various industries were his most beneficial acts. The taxes were reduced one half, and at his death he had fifty millions in the treasury, — a great sum in those days, — having paid off a debt of three hundred millions in eight years.

These and other public services showed his humane nature and his enlightened mind, until, after a glorious reign of twenty-one years, he was cut off, in the prime of his life and in the midst of his usefulness, by the assassin's dagger, May, 1610, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, — the greatest of all the French kings, — leaving five children by his second wife, Marie de Médicis, four of whom became kings or queens.

But to consider particularly Henry's connection with the Huguenots. If he deserted their ranks, he did not

forget them. He gave them religious toleration, — all they originally claimed. In 1598 was signed the memorable edict of Nantes, by which the Protestants preserved their churches, their schools, their consistories, and their synods; and they retained as a guarantee several important cities and fortresses, — a sort of *imperium in imperio.* They were made eligible to all offices. They were not subjected to any grievous test-act. They enjoyed social and political equality, as well as unrestricted religious liberty, except in certain cities. They gained more than the Puritans did in the reign of Charles II. They were not excluded from universities, nor degraded in their social rank, nor annoyed by unjust burial laws. The two religions were placed equally under the protection of the government. By this edict the Huguenots gained all that they had struggled for.

Still, the abjuration of Henry IV. was a great calamity to them. They lost their prestige; they were in a minority; they could count no longer on the leadership of princes. They were deprived gradually of the countenance of powerful nobles and all the potent influences of fashion; and when a reaction against Calvinism took place in the seventeenth century, the Huguenots had dwindled to a comparatively humble body of unimportant people. They lost heart and men of rank to defend them when the persecution of Richelieu overtook

them in the next reign. They were then unfit to contend successfully with that centralized monarchy of which Henry IV. had laid the foundation, and which Richelieu cemented by fraud and force. Louis XIV., educated by the Jesuits and always under their influence, repealed the charter which Henry IV. had given them. The persecution they suffered under Louis XIV. was more dreadful than that they suffered under Charles IX., since they had neither arms, nor organization, nor leaders, nor fortresses. Under the persecution of the Valois princes they had Condé and the King of Navarre and Coligny for leaders; they were strong enough to fight for their liberties, — they had enthusiasm and prestige and hope. Under the iron and centralized government of Louis XIV. they were completely defenceless, like lambs before wolves; they had no hopes, they could make no defence; they were an obnoxious, slandered, unimportant, unfashionable people, and their light had gone out. They had no religious enthusiasm even; they were small farmers and tradesmen and servants, and worshipped God in dingy chapels. No great men arose among them, as among the Puritans of England. They were still evangelical in their creed, but not earnest in defending it; so persecution wiped them out — was terribly successful. Eight hundred thousand of them perished in prisons and galleys or on scaffolds, and there was no help.

Henry IV., when he gave toleration to the Huguenots, never dreamed that his successors would undo his work. Had he foreseen that concession to the unchanged and unchangeable enemies of human freedom would have ended as it did, I believe his noble heart would have revolted from any peace until he could have reigned as a Protestant king. Oh, had he struggled a little longer for his crown, how different might have been the subsequent history of France, and even Europe itself! How much greater would have been his own fame! Even had he died as the defender of Protestant liberties, a greater glory than that of Gustavus would have been his forever. The immediate results of his abjuration were doubtless beneficial to himself, to the Huguenots, and to his country. Expediency gives great rewards; but expediency cannot control future events, — it is short-sighted, and only for the time successful. Ask you for the ultimate results of the abjuration of Henry IV., I point to the demolition of La Rochelle, under Richelieu, and the systematic humiliation of the Huguenots; I point to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, by Louis XIV., and the bitter and cruel and wholesale persecution which followed; I point to the atrocities of the dragonnades and the exile of the Huguenots to England and America and Holland; I point to the extinction of civil and religious liberty in France, — to the restoration of the

Jesuits, — to the prevalence of religious indifference under the guise of Roman Catholicism, until at last it threw off the mask and defied all authority, both human and divine, and invoked all the maddening passions of Revolution itself.

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GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.

1594–1632.

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR (1618–1648).

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS.

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR.

THE Thirty Years' War, of which Gustavus Adolphus was the greatest hero, was the result of those religious agitations which the ideas of Luther produced. It was the struggle to secure religious liberty, — a warfare between Catholic and Protestant Germany. It differed from the Huguenot contest in this, — that the Protestants of France took up arms against their king to extort religious privileges; whereas the Protestants of Germany were marshalled by independent princes against other independent princes of a different religion, who sought to suppress Protestantism. In this warfare between Catholic and Protestant States, there were great political entanglements and issues that affected the balance of power in Europe. Hence the Thirty Years' War was political as well as religious. It was not purely a religious war like the crusades, although religious ideas gave rise to it. Nor was it an insurrection

of the people against their rulers to secure religious rights, so much as a contest between Catholic and Protestant princes to secure the recognition of their religious opinions in their respective States.

The Emperor of Germany in the time of Luther was Charles V., — the most powerful potentate of Europe, and, moreover, a bigoted Catholic. On his abdication, — one of the most extraordinary events in history, — the German dominions were given to his brother Ferdinand; Spain and the Low Countries were bestowed on his son Philip. Ferdinand had already been elected King of the Romans. There was a close alliance between these princes of the House of Austria to suppress Protestantism in Europe. The new Austrian emperor was not, indeed, so formidable as his father had been, but was still one of the greatest monarchs of Europe; and so powerful was the House of Austria that it excited the jealousy of the other European powers. It was to prevent the dangerous ascendency of Austria that Henry IV. of France raised a great army with a view of invading Germany, but was assassinated before he could carry his scheme into execution. He had armed France to secure what is called the "balance of power;" and it was with the view of securing this balance of power that Cardinal Richelieu, though a prince of the Church, took the side of the Protestants in the Thirty Years' War. This famous contest may therefore be

regarded as a civil war, dividing the German nations; as a religious war, to establish freedom of belief; and as a war to prevent the ascendency of Austria, in which a great part of Europe was involved.

The beginning of the contest, however, was the result of religious agitation. The ideas of Luther created universal discussion. Discussion led to animosities. All Germany was in a ferment; and the agitation was not confined to those States which accepted the Reformation, but to Catholic States also. The Catholic princes resolved to crush the Reformation, first in their own dominions, and afterwards in the other States of Germany. Hence, a bloody persecution of the Protestants took place in all Catholic States. Their sufferings were unendurable. For a while they submitted to the cruel lash, but at last they resolved to defend the right of worshipping God according to their consciences. They armed themselves, for death seemed preferable to religious despotism. For more than fifty years after the death of Luther, Germany was the scene of commotions ending in a fiery persecution. At that time Germany was in advance of the rest of Europe in wealth and intelligence; the Protestants especially were kindled to an enthusiasm, pertaining to theological questions, which we in these times can but feebly realize; and the Germans were doubtless the most earnest and religious people in Europe. In those days there

was neither religious indifference nor scepticism nor rationalism. The faith of the people was simple, and they were resolved to maintain it at any cost. But there were religious parties and asperities, even among the Protestants. The Lutherans would not unite with the Calvinists, and the Calvinists would not accede to the demands of the Lutherans.

After a series of struggles with the Catholics, the Lutherans succeeded, by the treaty of Augsburg (1555), in securing toleration; and this toleration lasted during the reigns of Ferdinand I. and Maximilian II. Indeed, Germany enjoyed tranquillity until the reign of Matthias, in 1612. This usurping emperor, who had delivered Germany from the Turks, abolished in his dominions the Protestant religion, so far as edicts and persecution could deprive the Protestants of their religious liberties. Matthias died in 1619, and was succeeded by Ferdinand II., a bigoted prince, who had been educated by the Jesuits. This emperor was an inveterate enemy of the Protestants. He forbade their meetings, deprived them even of civil privileges, pulled down their churches and schools, erected scaffolds in every village, appointed only Catholic magistrates, and inflicted unsparing cruelties on all who seceded from the Catholic church.

It was under this Austrian emperor, seventy-three years from the death of Luther, that the first act of

After the painting by V. Brozik

THE IMPERIAL COUNCILLORS ARE THROWN OUT OF THE WINDOW BY THE BOHEMIAN DELEGATES

the bloody tragedy which I am to describe was opened by an insurrection in Bohemia, one of the hereditary possessions of the House of Austria.

In this kingdom, isolated from the rest of Germany, separated on every side from adjoining States by high mountains of volcanic origin, peopled with the descendants of the ancient Sclavonians, who were characterized by impulse and impetuosity, the reformed doctrines had taken a powerful hold of the affections and convictions of the people. The followers of John Huss and Jerome of Prague were something like the Lollards of England, in their spirit and sincerity. But they were persecuted by their Catholic rulers with a rigor and cruelty never seen among the Lollards; for Ferdinand II. was the hereditary king of Bohemia as well as emperor of Germany.

At last his tyranny and cruelties became unendurable, and in a violent burst of passionate indignation his deputies were thrown out of the windows of the chamber of the Council of Regency at Prague. This act of violence was the signal of a general revolt, not in Bohemia merely, but in Silesia, Moravia, Hungary, and Austria. The celebrated Count Mansfeld, a soldier of fortune, with only four thousand troops, dared to defy the whole imperial power; and for a while he was successful. The Bohemians renounced their allegiance to Ferdinand, and chose for their king Frederick V.,—

Elector Palatine of the Rhine, son-in-law of James I. of England, and head of the Protestant party in Germany. He unwisely abandoned his electoral palace at Heidelberg, to grasp the royal sceptre at Prague. But he was no match for the Austrian emperor, who, summoning from every quarter the allies and adherents of imperial power, and making peace with other enemies, poured into Bohemia such overwhelming forces under Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, that his authority was established more firmly than before. The battle of Prague (1620) decided the fate of Bohemia, and the Elector Palatine became a fugitive, and his possessions were given to the Duke of Bavaria.

Then followed a persecution which has had no parallel since the slaughter of the Albigenses and the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The unhappy kingdom of Bohemia was abandoned to inquisitions and executions; all liberties were suppressed, the nobles were decimated, ministers and teachers were burned or beheaded, and Protestants of every rank, age, and condition were prohibited from acting as guardians to children, or making wills, or contracting marriages with Catholics, or holding any office of trust and emolument. They were outlawed as felons, and disfranchised as infidels. The halls of justice were deserted, the Muses accompanied the learned in their melancholy flight, and all that remained of Bohemian gallantry and heroism forsook the land.

Strange to say, the land of Huss and Jerome became henceforth the strongest hold of Austrian despotism and papal superstition.

This is one of those instances where persecution proved successful. It is a hackneyed saying that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church;" and it is true that lofty virtues have been generally developed by self-sacrifice and martyrdom, and that only through great tribulation have permanent blessings been secured. The Hollanders, by inundating their fields and fighting literally to the "last ditch," preserved their liberties and secured ultimate prosperity. The fires of Smithfield did not destroy the reformed religion in England in the time of Mary, and the jails and judicial murders of later and better times did not prevent the progress of popular rights, or the extension of Puritanism in the wilds of the American continent. But in the history of society the instances are unfortunately numerous when bigotry and despotism have kindled their infernal fires and erected their bloody scaffolds, not to purify the Church and nourish the principles of Christian progress, but to destroy what is good as well as what is evil. What availed the struggles of the Waldenses in the Middle Ages? Who came to the rescue of Savonarola when he attempted to reform the lives of degenerate Florentines? What beneficial effects resulted ultimately from the Inquisition in Spain?

How was the revocation of the edict of Nantes overruled for the good of the Huguenots of France?

And yet the unfortunate suppression of religious liberty in Bohemia, and the sufferings of those who came to her rescue, especially the misfortunes of the Elector Palatine, arrayed the Protestant princes of Germany against the Emperor, and created general indignation throughout Europe. Austria became more than ever a hated and dreaded power, not merely to the States of Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and England, but to Catholic France herself, then ruled by that able and ambitious statesman Cardinal Richelieu, before whose tomb in an after age the czar Peter bowed in earnest homage from the recollection and admiration of his transcendent labors in behalf of absolutism. Even Richelieu, a prince of the Church and the persecutor of the Huguenots, was alarmed at the encroachments of Austria, and intrigued with Protestant princes to undermine her dangerous ascendency.

Then opened the second act of the bloody drama of the seventeenth century, when the allied Protestant princes of Germany, assisted by the English and the Dutch, rallied under the leadership of Christian, King of Denmark, and resolved to recover what they had lost; while Bethlen Gabor, a Transylvanian prince, at the head of an army of robbers, invaded Hungary and Austria. The Emperor, straitened in his finances, was

in no condition to meet this powerful confederacy, although the illustrious Tilly was the commander of his forces.

But the demon of despotism, who never sleeps, raised up to his assistance a great military genius. This was Wallenstein, Duke of Friedland, the richest noble in Bohemia. The person whom he most resembled, in that age of struggle and contending forces, when despotism sought unscrupulous agents, was Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, — the right hand of Charles I., in his warfare against the liberties of England. Like Strafford, he was an apostate from the principles in which he had been educated; like him, he had arisen from a comparatively humble station; like him, his talents were as commanding as his ambition, — devoted first to his own exaltation; and, secondly, to the cause of absolutism, with which he sympathized with all the intensity that a proud and domineering spirit may be supposed to feel for the struggles of inexperienced democracy. Like the English statesman, the German general was a Jesuit in the use of tools, jealous of his authority, liberal in his rewards, and fearful in his vengeance. Though greedy of admiration and fond of display, he surrounded himself with mystery and gloom. Like Strafford, he was commanding in his person, dignified, reserved, and sullen; with an eye piercing and melancholy, a brow lowering with thought and care,

and a lip compressed into determination and twisted into a smile of ironical disdain.

This nobleman had fought with distinction as a colonel at the battle of Prague, when Bohemian liberties had been prostrated, and had signally distinguished himself in his infamous crusade against his own countrymen. He offered, at his own expense, to raise and equip an army of fifty thousand men in the service of the Emperor; but demanded as a condition, that he should have the appointment of all his officers, and the privilege of enriching himself and army from the spoils and confiscations of conquered territories. These terms were extraordinary and humiliating to an absolute sovereign, yet, at the crisis in which Ferdinand was placed, they were too tempting to be refused.

Wallenstein fulfilled his promises, and raised in an incredibly short time an immense army, composed of outlaws and robbers and adventurers from all nations. He advanced rapidly against the allied Protestant forces, levying enormous contributions wherever he appeared; as imperious to friends as to foes, mistrusted and feared by both, yet supremely indifferent to praise or censure; resting on the power of brute force and his ability to enrich his soldiers. Possessing a fine military genius, unbounded means, and unscrupulous rapacity, and assisted by such generals as Tilly, Pappenheim, and Piccolomini, seconded by Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria,

he soon reduced his enemies to despair. The King of Denmark was unequal to the contest, and sued for peace. The Elector Frederic again became a fugitive, the Duke of Brunswick was killed, and the intrepid Mansfeld died. The Electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, the natural defenders of Protestantism and the leading princes of the league, were awed into an abject neutrality. The old protectors of Lutheranism were timid and despairing. The monarchs of Europe trembled. Germany lay prostrate and bleeding. Christendom stood aghast at the greatness of the calamities which afflicted Germany and threatened neighboring nations.

But the Emperor at Vienna was overjoyed, and swelled with arrogance and triumph. He divided among the members of his imperial house the rich benefices of the Church, and bestowed upon his victorious general the revenues of provinces. He now resolved to pursue the King of Denmark into his remotest territories, to dethrone the King of Sweden, to give away the crown of Poland, to aid the Spaniards in the recovery of the United Provinces, to exterminate the Protestant religion, to subvert the liberties of the German nations, and reign as a terrible incarnation of imperial tyranny. He would even revive the dreams of Charlemagne and Charles V., and make Vienna the centre of that power which once emanated from Rome. He would ally him-

self more strongly with the Pope, and extend the double tyranny of priests and kings over the whole continent of Europe. Fines, imprisonments, tortures, banishments, and executions were now added to the desolations which one hundred and fifty thousand soldiers inflicted on villages and cities that had been for generations increasing in wealth and prosperity.

In that dark hour of calamity and fears, Providence raised up a greater hero than Wallenstein, a noble protector and intrepid deliverer, even Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden; and the third act of the political tragedy opens with his brilliant career.

Carlyle has somewhere said: "Is not every genius an impossibility until he appear?" This is singularly true of Gustavus Adolphus. It was the last thing for contemporaries to conjecture that the deliverer of Germany, and the great hero of the Thirty Years' War, would have arisen in the ice-bound regions of northern Europe. No great character had arisen in Sweden of exalted fame, neither king nor poet, nor philosopher, nor even singer. The little kingdom, to all appearance, was rich only in mines of iron and hills of snow. It was not till the middle of the sixteenth century that Sweden was even delivered from base dependence on Denmark.

But Gustavus before he was thirty-five years of age

had made his countrymen a nation of soldiers; had freed his kingdom from Danish, Russian, and Polish enemies; had made great improvements in the art of war, having introduced a new system of tactics never materially improved except by Frederic II.; had reduced strategy to a science; had raised the importance of the infantry, had increased the strictness of military discipline, had trained up a band of able generals, and inspired his soldiers with unbounded enthusiasm.

And he had raised in the camp a new tone of moral feeling. Not even Cromwell equalled him in divesting war of its customary atrocities, and keeping alive the spirit of religion. The worship of God formed one of the most important duties of the Swedish army wherever located. "Twice every day the roll of the drum assembled the soldiers to prayer. The usual vices of soldiers, like profanity and drunkenness and gambling, were uniformly punished. Death was inflicted on any soldier who assaulted a citizen in his house. Even a certificate was required of the chief citizens of any place where troops were quartered, that their conduct had been orderly. He never allowed, under any provocation, a city to be taken by assault, — a striking contrast to the imperial generals."

Nor amid the toils and dangers of war was Gustavus unmindful of his duties as a king. He was one of the most enlightened statesmen that had appeared since

Charlemagne and Alfred. He established schools and colleges, founded libraries, reformed the codes of law, introduced wise mercantile regulations, rewarded eminent merit, respected the voice of experience, and developed the industries of the country. What Richelieu and Colbert did for France, what Burleigh and Cromwell did for England, Gustavus did for Sweden. His prime minister is illustrious for wisdom and ability, the celebrated Oxenstiern, through whose labors and genius the country felt no impoverishment from war. He laid the foundation of that prosperity which made a little kingdom great.

But all his excellences as a general, a statesman, and a ruler paled before the exalted virtues of his private life. His urbanity, his gentleness, his modesty, his meekness, his simplicity, and his love won all hearts, and have never been exceeded except by Alfred the Great. He was a Saint Louis on a throne, in marked contrast with the suspicion, duplicity, roughness, and egotism of Oliver Cromwell, — the only other great man of the century who equalled Gustavus in the value of public services and enlightened mind. It is not often that Christian graces and virtues are developed amid the tumults of war. David lost nothing of his pious fervor and reliance on God when pursuing the Philistines, nor Marcus Aurelius when fighting barbarians on the frozen Danube. The perils and vicisssitudes

of war, with the momentous interests involved, made Lincoln shine, amid all his jokes, a firm believer in the overruling power that Napoleon failed to see. And so of Washington: he was a better man and firmer Christian from the responsibilities that were thrust upon him. Not so with Frederic the Great, and the marshals of Louis XIV., with the exception of Turenne: war seemed rather to develop their worst qualities. It usually makes a man unscrupulous, hard, and arrogant. Military life is anything but interesting in the usual bearing of Prussian officers. In our own Revolutionary war, generals developed pride and avarice and jealousy. War turned Tilly into a fiend. How cold and sullen and selfish it made Napoleon! How grasping and greedy it made Marlborough! How unscrupulous it made Clive and Hastings! How stubborn and proud it made Wellington! How vain and pompous it made Scott! How overbearing it made Belle-Isle and Villars! How reckless and hard it made Ney and Murat! The dangers and miseries of war develop sternness, hardness, and indifference to suffering. It is violence; and violence does not naturally produce the peaceful virtues. It produces courage, indeed, but physical rather than moral, — least of all, that spiritual courage which makes martyrs and saints. It makes boon companions, not friends. It gives exaggerated ideas of self-importance. It exalts the outward and material, not the spiritual

and the real. The very tread of a military veteran is stately, proud, and conscious, — like that of a procession of cardinals, or of railway kings.

So that when a man inured to camps and battles shines in the modest unconsciousness of a Christian gentleman or meditative sage, we feel unusual reverence for him. We feel that his soul is unpolluted, and that he is superior to ordinary temptations.

And nothing in war develops the greatness of the higher qualities of heart and soul but the sacredness of a great cause. This takes a man out of himself, and binds his soul to God. He learns to feel that he is merely an instrument of Almighty power. It was the sacredness of a great cause that shed such a lustre on the character of Washington. How unimpressible the victories of Charlemagne, disconnected with that work of civilization which he was sent into the world to reconstruct! How devoid of interest and grandeur were the battles of Marston Moor and Worcester, without reference to those principles of religious liberty which warmed the soul of Cromwell! The conflicts of Bunker Hill and Princeton were insignificant when compared with the mighty array of forces at Blenheim or Austerlitz; but when associated with ideas of American independence, and the extension of American greatness from the Atlantic to the Pacific, their sublime results are impressed upon the mind with

ever-increasing power. Even French soldiers have seldom been victorious unless inspired by ideas of liberty or patriotism. It is ever the majesty of a cause which makes not only great generals but good men. And it was the greatness of the cause with which Gustavus Adolphus was identified that gave to his character such moral beauty, — that same beauty which exalted William the Silent and William of Orange amid the disasters of their country, and made them eternally popular. After all, the permanent idols of popular idolatry are not the intellectually great, but the morally beautiful, — and all the more attractive when their moral excellence is in strong contrast with the prevailing vices of contemporaries. It was the moral greatness of Gustavus which has given to him his truest fame. Great was he as a military genius, but greater still as a benefactor of oppressed peoples.

Surely it was no common hero who armed himself for the deliverance of Germany, which prostrate and bleeding held out her arms to be rescued from political degradation, and for the preservation of liberties dearer to good men than life itself. All Protestant Europe responded to the cry; for great interests were now at stake, not in Germany merely, but in the neighboring nations. It was to deliver his Lutheran brethren in danger of extermination, and to raise a barrier against the overwhelming power of Austria, that Gustavus Adolphus

lent his armies to the Protestant princes of Germany. Other motives may have entered into his mind; his pride had been piqued by the refusal of the Emperor Ferdinand to acknowledge his title as King; his dignity was wounded by the contemptuous insolence shown to his ambassadors; his fears were excited that Austria might seek to deprive him of his throne. The imperial armies had already conquered Holstein and Jutland, — provinces that belonged to Sweden. Unless Austria were humbled, Sweden would be ruined. Gustavus embarked in the war against Austria, as William III. afterwards did against Louis XIV. Wars to preserve the "balance of power" have not generally been deemed offensive, when any power has become inordinately aggrandized. Pitt opposed Napoleon, to rescue Europe from universal monarchy.

So Gustavus, deeply persuaded of the duties laid upon him, assembled together the deputies of his kingdom, — the representatives of the three estates, — and explained to them his intentions and motives. "I know," said he, "the dangers I am about to encounter; I know that it is probable I shall never return; I feel convinced that my life will terminate on the field of battle. Let no one imagine that I am actuated by private feelings or fondness for war. My object is to set bounds to the increasing power of a dangerous empire before all resistance becomes impossible. Your

children will not bless your memory if, instead of civil and religious freedom, you bequeath to them the superstitions of monks and the double tyranny of popes and emperors. We must prevent the subjugation of the Continent before we are reduced to depend upon a narrow sea as the only safeguard of our liberties; for it is delusion to suppose that a mighty empire will not be able to raise fleets, if once firmly established on the shores of the ocean." Then taking his infant daughter Christiana in his arms, he recommended her to the protection of the nation, and bade adieu to the several orders of the State. Amid their tears and sobs, he invoked upon them and his enterprise the blessing of Almighty God. Then, hastening his preparations, he embarked his forces for the deliverance of Germany. It was on the 24th of June, 1630, just one hundred years after the confession of Augsburg, that Gustavus Adolphus landed on the German soil.

If ever the ruler of a nation is to be justified for going to war when his country is not actually invaded, it was doubtless Gustavus Adolphus. Had he withheld his aid, the probability is that all Germany would have succumbed to the Austrian emperor, and have been incorporated with his empire; and not only Germany, but Denmark and Sweden. The Protestant religion would have been suppressed in northern Germany, as it was in France by Louis XIV. There would have been no

Protestant country in Europe, but England, and perhaps Holland. A united German Empire, with the restoration of the Catholic religion, would have been a most dangerous power, — much more so than at the present day. Some there are, doubtless, who would condemn Gustavus for the invasion of Germany, and think he ought to have stayed at home and let his unfortunate neighbors take care of themselves the best way they could. Perhaps the peace societies would take this ground, and the apostles of thrift and material prosperity. But I confess, when I see a man like the King of Sweden, with all the temptations of luxury and ease, encountering all sorts of perils and fatigues, — yea, offering up his life in battle in order to emancipate suffering humanity, — then every generous impulse and every dictate of enlightened reason urge me to add my praises with those of past generations in honor of such exalted heroism.

According to the authors of those times, signs and prodigies appeared, to warn mankind of the sanguinary struggle which was now to take place. "In the dead of night, on wild heaths, in solitary valleys, the clang of arms was heard. Armies were seen encountering each other in the heavens, marshalled by aërial leaders, while monstrous births, mock suns, and showers of fire filled the minds of the superstitious with fear and dread. It would be puerile to believe these statements,

yet if the stupendous framework of external nature ever could exhibit sympathy with the brief calamities of man, it may well be supposed to have been displayed when one of the fairest portions of the earth was again to be ravaged with fire and sword; and when the melancholy lesson, so often exemplified before, was to receive still further confirmation, — that of all the evils with which Divine wisdom permits this world to be visited, none can be compared to those which the wrath of man is so often eager to inflict upon his fellows."

I need not detail the various campaigns of the Swedish hero, his marchings and counter-marchings, his sieges and battles and victories, until the power of Austria was humbled and northern Germany was delivered. The history of all war is the same. There is no variety except to the eye of a military man. Military history is a dreary record of dangers, sufferings, mistakes, and crimes; occasionally it is relieved by brilliant feats of courage and genius, which create enthusiastic admiration, but generally it is monotonous. It has but little interest except to contemporaries. Who now reads the details of our last great war? Who has not almost forgotten the names of its ordinary generals? How sickening the description of the Crusades! The mind cannot dwell on the conflagrations, the massacres, the starvations, the desolations, of an invaded country

Few even read a description of the famous battles of the world, which decided the fate of nations. When battles and marches are actually taking place, and all is uncertainty, then there is a vivid curiosity to learn immediate results; but when wars are ended, we forget the intense excitements which we may have felt when they were taking place. We gaze with eager interest on a game of football, but when it is ended we care but little for the victors. It is only when the remote consequences of great wars are traced by philosophical historians, revealing the ways of Providence, retribution, and eternal justice, that interest is enkindled. No book to me is more dreary and uninteresting than the campaigns of Frederic II., though painted by the hand of one of the greatest masters of modern times. Even interest in the details of the battles of Napoleon is absorbed in the interest we feel in the man, — how he was driven hither and thither by the Providence he ignored, and made to point a moral to an immortal tale. All we care about the histories of wars is the general results, and the principles to be deduced as they bear on the cause of civilization.

It was fortunate for the fame and the cause of Gustavus that at the very outset of his career, when he landed in Pomerania, with his small army of twenty thousand men, the Emperor had been prevailed upon by a pressure he could not resist, and the intrigues of

all the German princes, to dispense with the services of Wallenstein. Spain, France, Bavaria, — the whole Electoral College, Catholic as well as Protestant, — clamored for the discharge of the most unscrupulous general of modern times. He was detested and feared by everybody. Humanity shed tears over his exactions and cruelties, while general fears were aroused that his influence was dangerous to the public peace. Most people supposed that the war was virtually ended, and that he was therefore no longer needed.

Loath was Ferdinand to part with the man to whom he was indebted for the establishment of his throne; and it seems he was also personally attached to him. Long did he resist expostulations and threats. He felt as poor Ganganelli felt when called upon by the Bourbon courts of Europe to annul the charter of the Jesuits. Wallenstein would probably have been retained by Ferdinand, had this been possible; but the Emperor was forced to yield to overwhelming importunities. So the dismissal of the general was decreed at the diet of Worms, and a messenger of the Emperor delivered to the haughty victor the decree of his sovereign.

Wallenstein was then at the head of one hundred thousand men. Would he obey the order? Would he retire to private life? Ambitious and unscrupulous as he was, he knew that no one, however powerful, could resist an authority universally conceded

to be supreme and legitimate. It was like the recall of a proconsul by the Roman Emperor and Senate: he could resist for a time, but resistance meant ultimate ruin. He also knew that he would be recalled, for he was necessary to the Emperor. He anticipated the successes of Gustavus. He was not prepared to be a traitor. He would wait his time.

So he resigned his command without a moment's hesitation, and with apparent cheerfulness. He even loaded the messenger with costly gifts. He appeared happy to be relieved from labor and responsibility, and retired at once to his vast Bohemian estates to pursue his favorite studies in the science of the stars, to enshroud himself in mystery and gloom, and dazzle his countrymen by the splendor of his life. "His table was never furnished with less than one hundred covers; none but a noble of ancient family was intrusted with the office of superintending his household; an armed guard of fifty men waited in his antechamber; the ramparts of his castle were lined with sentinels; six barons and as many knights constantly attended on his person; sixty pages were trained and supported in his palace, which was decorated with all the wonders of art, and almost realized the fictions of Eastern luxury." In this splendid retirement Wallenstein brooded on his wrongs, and waited for the future.

The dismissal of this able general was a great mis-

take on the part of the Emperor. There were left no generals capable of opposing Gustavus. The supreme command had devolved on Tilly, able but bigoted, and best known for his remorseless cruelty when Magdeburg was taken by assault, — the direst tragedy of the war. This city was one of the first to welcome the invasion of the King of Sweden, and also to adopt the Protestant religion. It was the most prosperous city in northern Germany; one of the richest and most populous. Against this mercantile fortress Tilly directed all his energies, for he detested the spirit of its people. It was closely invested by the imperial troops, and fell before Gustavus could advance to relieve it. It was neglected by the electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, who were timid and pusillanimous, and it was lulled into false security by its strong position and defences. Not sufficient preparation for defence had been made by the citizens, who trusted to its strong walls, and knew that Gustavus was advancing to relieve it. But unexpectedly it was assaulted in the most daring and desperate manner, and all was lost. On a Sabbath morning, the sudden toll of alarm bells, the roar of artillery, the roll of drums beating to quarter, and the piercing cries of women and children, mingled with the shouts and execrations of brutal and victorious soldiers, announced the fate of Magdeburg. Forty thousand people — men, women, and children — were inhumanly

butchered, without necessity, quarter, compassion, or remorse. So cold and hard is war! This was the saddest massacre in the history of Germany, and one of the greatest crimes that a successful general ever committed. History has no language, and painting no colors to depict the horrors of that dreadful scene; and the interval of more than two hundred years has not weakened the impression of its horrors. The sack of Magdeburg stands out in the annals of war like the siege of Tyre and the fall of Jerusalem.

But it roused the Protestants as from a trance. It united them, as the massacre of St. Bartholomew united the Huguenots. They marched under the standard of Gustavus with the same enthusiasm that the Huguenots showed under Henry IV. at the battle of Ivry. There was now no limit to the successes of the heroic Swede. The decisive battle of Leipsic, the passage of the Lech, the defence of Nuremberg, and the great final victory at Lutzen raised the military fame of Gustavus to a height unknown since Hannibal led his armies over the Alps, or Cæsar encountered the patrician hosts at the battle of Pharsalia. No victories were ever more brilliant than his; and they not only gave him a deathless fame, but broke forever the Austrian fetters. His reputation as a general was fairly earned. He ranks with Condé, Henry IV., Frederic the Great, Marlborough, and Wellington; not, perhaps, with Alexander,

Cæsar, and Napoleon, — those phenomena of military genius, the exalted trio who shine amid the glories of the battlefield, as Homer, Dante, and Shakspeare loom up in fame above other immortal poets.

In two years from the landing of Gustavus Adolphus on the island of Ruden, near the southern extremity of the Baltic, he expelled a triumphant enemy from Pomerania, traversed the banks of the Oder, overran the Duchy of Mecklenburg, ascended the Elbe, delivered Saxony from the armies of Tilly, crossed the Thuringian forest, entered Frankfort in triumph, restored the Palatinate to its lawful sovereign, took possession of some of the strongest fortresses on the Rhine, overran Bavaria, occupied its capital, crossed the Danube, and then returned to Saxony, to offer up his life on the plains of Lutzen. There, on that memorable battlefield, where the descending sun of victory in later times shed a delusive gleam on the eagles of Napoleon before his irremediable ruin, did Gustavus encounter the great antagonist of German liberties, whom the necessities of the Emperor had summoned from retirement. Wallenstein once more commanded the imperial armies, but only on conditions which made him virtually independent of his master. He was generalissimo, with almost unlimited authority, so long as the war should last; and the Emperor agreed to remove neither the general himself nor his officers, and gave

him principalities and spoils indefinitely. He was the most powerful subject in Europe, and the greatest general next to Gustavus. I read of no French or English general who has been armed with such authority. Cromwell and Napoleon took it; it was not conferred by legitimate and supreme power. Had Wallenstein been successful to the end, he might have grasped the imperial sceptre. Had Gustavus lived, he might have been the dictator of Germany.

Impatient were both commanders to engage in the contest which each knew would be decisive. Long did they wait for opportunities. At last, on the 16th of November, 1632, the defenders and the foes of German liberties arrayed themselves for the great final encounter. The Protestants gained the day, but Gustavus fell, exclaiming to the murderous soldiers who demanded his name and quality, "I am the King of Sweden! And I seal this day, with my blood, the liberties and religion of the German nation."

The death of Gustavus Adolphus in the hour of victory was a shock which came upon the allies like the loss of the dearest friend. The victory seemed too dearly purchased. The greatest protector which Protestantism ever knew had perished, as he himself predicted. Pappenheim, the bravest of the Austrian generals, also perished; and with him, the flower of Wallenstein's army. Schiller thinks that Gustavus

died fortunately for his fame; that had he survived the decisive battle of Lutzen, he not only could have dictated terms to the Emperor, but might have yielded to the almost irresistible temptation of giving laws to the countries he had emancipated. But he did not live to be tried. That rarest of all trials was reserved alone for our Washington to pass through triumphantly, — to set an example to all countries and ages of the superiority of moral to intellectual excellence. Gustavus might have triumphed like Washington, and he might have yielded like Cromwell. We do not know. This only we know, — that he was not merely the great hero of the Thirty Years' War, but one of the best men who ever wore a crown; that he conferred on the Protestants and on civilization an immortal and inestimable service, and that he is to be regarded as one of the great benefactors of the world.

The Thirty Years' War loses its dramatic interest after the battle of Lutzen. The final issue was settled, although the war was carried on sixteen years longer. It was not till 1648 that the peace of Westphalia was signed, which guaranteed the liberties of Germany, and established the balance of power. That famous treaty has also been made the foundation of all subsequent treaties between the European nations, and created an era in modern history. It took place after the death of Richelieu, when Mazarin ruled France in

the name of Louis XIV., and when Charles I. was in the hands of Cromwell.

With the death of Gustavus we also partially lose sight of Wallenstein. He never afterwards gained victories commensurate with his reputation. He remained, after the battle of Lutzen, unaccountably inactive in Bohemia. But if his military fame was tarnished, his pride and power remained. His military exactions became unendurable, and it is probable he was a traitor. So unpopular did he become, and so suspicious was the Emperor, who lost confidence in him, that he was assassinated by the order of his sovereign. He was too formidable to be removed in any other way. He probably deserved his fate. Although it was difficult to bring this great culprit to justice, yet his death is a lesson to traitors. "There are many ways," said Cicero, "in which a man may die," — referring to the august usurper of the Roman world.

I will not dwell on the sixteen remaining years of the Thirty Years' War. It is too horrible a picture to paint. The desolation and misery which overwhelmed Germany were most frightful and revolting. The war was carried on without system or genius. "Expeditions were undertaken apparently with no other view than to desolate hostile provinces, till in the end provisions and winter quarters formed the principal object of the summer campaigns." "Disease, famine, and want of

discipline swept away whole armies before they had seen an enemy." Soldiers deserted the ranks, and became roving banditti. Law and justice entirely vanished from the land. Germany, it is asserted by Mitchell, lost probably twelve millions of people. Before the war, the population was sixteen millions; at the close of the war, it had dwindled to four millions. The city of Augsburg at one time had eighty thousand inhabitants; at the close of the war, it had only eighteen thousand. "No less than thirty thousand villages and hamlets were destroyed. Peaceful peasants were hunted for mere sport, like the beasts of the forest. Citizens were nailed up and fired at like targets. Women were collected into bands, driven like slaves into camp, and exposed to indignities worse than death. The fields were allowed to run waste, and forests sprung up and covered entire districts which before the war had been under full cultivation." Amid these scenes of misery and ruin, vices were more marked than calamities. They were carried to the utmost pitch of vulgarity. Both Austrian and Swedish generals were often so much intoxicated, for days together, as to be incapable of service. Never was a war attended by so many horrors. Never was crime more general and disgusting. So terrible were the desolations, that it took Germany one hundred years to recover from her losses. It never recovered the morality and religion

which existed in the time of Luther. That war retarded civilization in all the countries where it raged. It was a moral and physical conflagration.

But there is a God in this world, and the evils were overruled. It is certain that Protestantism was rescued from extermination on the continent of Europe. It is clear also that a barrier was erected against the aggressions of Austria. The Catholic and the Protestant religions were left unmolested in the countries where they prevailed, and all religious sects were tolerated. Religious toleration, since the Thirty Years' War, has been the boast and glory of Germany.

We should feel a sickening melancholy if something for the ultimate good of the world were not to come from such disasters as filled Germany with grief and indignation for a whole generation; for the immediate effects of the Thirty Years' War were more disastrous than those of any war I have read of in the history of Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire. In the civil wars of France and England, cities and villages were generally spared. Civilization in those countries has scarcely ever been retarded for more than a generation; but it was put back in Germany for a century. Yet the enormous sacrifice of life and property would seem to show the high value which Providence places on the great rights of mankind, in comparison with material prosperity or the lives of men. What is

spiritual is permanent; what is material is transient. The early history of Christianity is the history of martyrdom. Five millions of Crusaders perished, that Europe might learn liberality of mind. It took one hundred years of contention and two revolutions to secure religious toleration in England. France passed through awful political hurricanes, in order that feudal injustice might be removed. In like manner, twelve millions of people perished in Germany, that despotism might be rebuked.

Fain would we believe that what little was gained proved a savor of life unto life; that seeds of progress were planted in that unhappy country which after a lapse of one hundred years would germinate and develop a higher civilization. What a great Protestant power has arisen in northern Germany to awe and keep in check not Catholicism merely, but such a hyperborean giant as Russia in its daring encroachments. But for Prussia, Russia might have extended her conquests to the south as well as to the west. But for the Thirty Years' War, no such empire as Prussia would have been probable, or perhaps possible. But for that dreadful contest, there might have been to-day only the Catholic religion among the descendants of the Teutonic barbarians on the continent of Europe. But for that war, the Austrian Empire might have retained a political ascendency in

Europe until the French Revolution; and such countries as Sweden and Denmark might have been absorbed in it, as well as Saxony, Brandenburg, and Hanover. What a terrible thing for Germany would have been the unbroken and iron despotism of Austria, extending its Briarean arms into every corner of Europe where the German language is spoken! What a blow such a despotism would have been to science, literature, and philosophy! Would Catholic Austria, supreme in Germany, have established schools, or rewarded literary men? The Jesuits would have flourished and triumphed from Pomerania to Wallachia; from the Baltic to the Danube.

It may have taken one hundred years for Germany to rally after such miseries and disasters as I have had time only to allude to, and not fully to describe; but see how gloriously that country has at last arisen above all misfortunes! Why may we not predict a noble future for so brave and honest a people, — the true descendants of those Teutonic conquerers to whom God gave, nearly two thousand years ago, the possessions and the lands of the ancient races who had not what the Germans had,—a soul; the soul which hopes, and the soul which conquers? The Thirty Years' War proved that liberty is not a dream, nor truth a defeated power. Liberty cannot be extinguished among such peoples, though "oceans may overwhelm it and

mountains may press it down." It is the boon of one hundred generations, the water of life distilled from the tears of unnumbered millions, — the precious legacy of heroes and martyrs, who in different nations and in different ages, inspired by the contemplation of its sublime reality, counted not their lives dear unto them, if by the sacrifice of life this priceless blessing could be transmitted to posterity.

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CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU.

A. D. 1585–1642.

ABSOLUTISM.

CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU.

ABSOLUTISM.

CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU is an illustration of what can be done for the prosperity and elevation of a country by a man whom we personally abhor, and whose character is stained by glaring defects and vices. If there was a statesman in French history who was pre-eminently unscrupulous, selfish, tyrannical, and cruel, that statesman was the able and wily priest who ruled France during the latter years of Louis XIII. And yet it would be difficult to find a ruler who has rendered more signal services to the state or to the monarch whom he served. He extricated France from the perils of anarchy, and laid the foundation for the grandeur of the monarchy under Louis XIV. It was his mission to create a strong government, when only a strong government could save the kingdom from disintegration; so that absolutism, much as we detest it, seems to have been one of the needed forces of the seventeenth century.

It was needed in France, to restrain the rapacity and curtail the overgrown power of feudal nobles, whose cabals and treasons were fatal to the interests of law and order.

The assassination of Henry IV. was a great calamity. The government fell into the hands of his widow, Marie de Médicis, a weak and frivolous woman. Under her regency all kinds of evils accumulated. So many conflicting interests and animosities existed that there was little short of anarchy. There were not popular insurrections and rebellions, for the people were ignorant, and were in bondage to their feudal masters; but the kingdom was rent by the rivalries and intrigues of the great nobles, who, no longer living in their isolated castles but in the precincts of the court, fought duels in the streets, plundered the royal treasury, robbed jewellers and coachmakers, paid no debts, and treated the people as if they were dogs or cattle. They claimed all the great offices of state, and all high commands in the army and navy; sold justice, tampered with the law, quarrelled with the parliaments, — indeed, were a turbulent, haughty, and powerful aristocracy, who felt that they were above all law and all restraint. They were not only engaged in perpetual intrigues, but even in treasonable correspondence with the enemies of their country. They disregarded the honor of the kingdom, and attempted to divide it into

principalities for their children. "The Guises wished to establish themselves in Provence, the Montmorencies in Languedoc, the Longuevilles in Picardy. The Duke of Epernon sought to retain the sovereignty of Guienne, and the Duke of Vendôme to secure the sovereignty of Brittany." One wanted to be constable, another admiral, a third to be governor of a province, in order to tyrannize and enrich themselves like Roman proconsuls. Every outrage was shamelessly perpetrated by them with impunity, because they were too powerful to be punished. They assassinated their enemies, filled the cities with their armed retainers, and made war even on the government; so that all central power was a mockery. The Queen-regent was humiliated and made contemptible, and was forced, in her turn and in self-defence, to intrigues and cabals, and sought protection by setting the nobles up against each other, and thus dividing their forces. Even the parliaments, which were courts of law, were full of antiquated prejudices, and sought only to secure their own privileges, — at one time siding with the Queen-regent, and then with the factious nobles. The Huguenots were the best people of the land; but they were troublesome, since they possessed cities and fortresses, and erected an *imperium in imperio*. In their synods and assemblies they usurped the attributes of secular rulers, and discussed questions of peace and war. They entered

into formidable conspiracies, and fomented the troubles and embarrassments of the government. The abjuration of Henry IV. had thinned their ranks and deprived them of court influence. No great leaders remained, since they had been seduced by fashion. The Huguenots were a disappointed and embittered party, hard to please, and hard to be governed; full of fierce resentments, and soured by old recollections. They had obtained religious liberty, but with this they were not contented. Their spirit was not unlike that of the Jacobins in England after the Stuarts were expelled from the throne. So all things combined to produce a state of anarchy and discontent. Feudalism had done its work. It was a good thing on the dissolution of the Roman Empire, when society was resolved into its original elements, — when barbarism on the one hand, and superstition on the other, made the Middle Ages funereal, dismal, violent, despairing. But commerce, arts, and literature had introduced a new era, — still unformed, a vast chaos of conflicting forces, and yet redeemed by reviving intelligence and restless daring. The one thing which society needed in that transition period was a strong government in the hands of kings, to restore law and develop national resources.

Now amid all these evils Richelieu grew up. Under the guise of levity and pleasure and good-nature, he

From the painting by Ph. de Champaigne, National Gallery, London

CARDINAL RICHELIEU

studied and comprehended all these parties and factions, and hated them all. All alike were hostile to the central power, which he saw was necessary to the preservation of law and to the development of the resources of the country.

Moreover, he was ambitious of power himself, which he loved as Michael Angelo loved art, and Palestrina loved music. Power was his master-passion, and consumed all other passions; and he resolved to gain it in any way he could, — unscrupulously, by flatteries, by duplicities, by sycophancies, by tricks, by lies, even by services. That was his end. He cared nothing for means. He was a politician.

The progress of his elevation is interesting, but hideous. Armand Jean Duplessis was born in 1585, of a noble family of high rank. He was designed for the army, but a bishopric falling to the gift of his family, he was made a priest. He early distinguished himself in his studies, for he was precocious and had great abilities. At twenty he was doctor of the Sorbonne, and before he was twenty-one he received from the Pope, Paul V., the emblems of spiritual power as a prelate of the Church. But he was too young to be made a bishop, according to the canons, — a difficulty, however, which he easily surmounted: he told a lie to the Pope, and then begged for an absolution. He then attached himself to the worthless favorite of the Queen-

regent, Concini, one of her countrymen; and through him to the Queen herself, Marie de Médicis, who told him her secrets, which he betrayed when it suited his interests. When Louis XIII. attained his majority, Richelieu paid his court to De Luynes, who was then all-powerful with the King, and who secured him a cardinal's hat; and when this miserable favorite died, — this falconer, this keeper of birds, yet duke, peer, governor, and minister, — Richelieu wound himself around the King, Louis XIII., the most impotent of all the Bourbons, made himself necessary, and became minister of foreign affairs; and his great rule began (1624).

During all these seventeen years of office-climbing, Richelieu was to all appearance the most amiable man in France; everybody liked him, and everybody trusted him. He was full of amenities, promises, bows, smiles, and flatteries. He always advocated the popular side with reigning favorites; courted all the great ladies; was seen in all the fashionable salons; had no offensive opinions; was polite to everybody; was non-committal; fond of games and spectacles; frivolous among fools, learned among scholars; grave among functionaries, devout among prelates; cunning as a fox, brave as a lion, supple as a dog; all things to all men; an Alcibiades, a Jesuit; with no apparent animosities; handsome, witty, brilliant;

preacher, courtier, student; as full of hypocrisy as an egg is of meat; with eyes wide open, and thoughts disguised; all eyes and no heart; reserved or communicative as it suited his purpose. This was that arch-intriguer who was seeking all the while, not the sceptre of the King, but the power of the King. Should you say that this non-committal, agreeable, and amiable politician — who quarrelled with nobody, and revealed nothing to anybody; who had cheated all parties by turns — was the man to save France, to extricate his country from all the evils to which I have alluded, to build up a great throne (even while he who sat upon it was utterly contemptible) and make that throne the first in Europe, and to establish absolutism as one of the needed forces of the seventeenth century?

Yet so it was; and his work was all the more difficult when the character of the King is considered. Louis XIII. was a different kind of man from his father Henry IV. and his grandson Louis XIV. He had no striking characteristics but feebleness and timidity and love of ignoble pleasures. He had no ambitions or powerful passions; was feeble and sickly from a child, — ruled at one time by his mother, and then by a falconer; and apparently taking but little interest in affairs of state.

But if it was difficult to gain ascendency over such a frivolous and inglorious Sardanapalus, it was easy to

retain it when this ascendency was once acquired. For Richelieu made him comprehend the dangers which menaced his life and his throne; that some very able man must be intrusted with supreme delegated power, who would rule for the benefit of him he served, — a servant, and yet a master; like Metternich in Austria, after the wars of Napoleon, — a man whose business and aim were to exalt absolutism on a throne. Moreover, he so complicated public affairs that his services were indispensable. Nobody could fill his place.

Also, it must be remembered that the King was isolated, and without counsellors whom he could trust. After the death of De Luynes he had no bosom friend. He was surrounded with perplexities and secret enemies. His mother, who had been regent, defied his authority; his brothers sought to wear his crown; the nobles conspired against his throne; the Protestants theatened another civil war; the parliaments thought only of retaining their privileges; the finances were disordered; the treasures which Henry IV. had accumulated had been squandered in bribing the great nobles; foreign enemies had invaded the soil of France; evils and dangers were accumulating on every side, with such terrific force as to jeopardize the very existence of the monarchy; and one necessity became apparent, even to the weak mind of the King, — that he must delegate

his power to some able man, who, though he might rule unscrupulously and tyrannically, would yet be faithful to the crown, and establish the central power for the benefit of his heirs and the welfare of the state.

Now Richelieu was just the man he needed, just such a man as the times required, — a man raised up to do important work, like Cromwell in England, like Bismarck in Prussia, like Cavour in Italy: doubtless a great hypocrite, yet sincere in the conviction that a strong government was the great necessity of his country; a great scoundrel, yet a patriotic and wise statesman, who loved his country with the ardor of a Mirabeau, while nobody loved him. Besides, he loved absolutism, both because he was by nature a tyrant, and because he was a member of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. He called to mind old Rome under the Cæsars, and mediæval Rome under the popes, and what a central authority had effected for civilization in times of anarchy, and in times of darkness and superstition; and the King to him was a sort of vicegerent of divine power, clothed in authority based on divine right, — the idea of kings in the Middle Ages. The state was his, to be managed as a man manages his farm, — as a South Carolinian once managed his slaves. The idea that political power properly emanates from the people, — the idea of Rousseau and

Jefferson, — never once occurred to him; nor even political power in the hands of aristocrats, fettered by a constitution and amenable to the nation. A constitutional monarchy existed nowhere, except perhaps in England. Unrestricted and absolute power in the hands of a king was the only government he believed in. The king might be feeble, in which case he could delegate his power to ministers; or he might be imbecile, in which case he might be virtually dethroned; but his royal rights were sacred, his authority incontestable, and consecrated by all usage and precedent.

Yet while Richelieu would uphold the authority of the crown as supreme and absolute, he would not destroy the prestige of the aristocracy; for he was a nobleman himself, — he belonged to their class. He believed in caste, in privileges, in monopolies; therefore he would not annul either rank or honor. The nobles were welcome to retain their stars and orders and ribbons and heraldic distinctions, even their parks and palaces and falcons and hounds. They were a favored class, that feudalism had introduced and ages had indorsed; but even they must be subservient to the crown, from which their honors emanated, and hence to order and law, of which the king was the keeper. They must be subjects of the government, as well as allies and supporters. The government was royal, not aristocratic. The privileges of the nobility were social rather than

political, although the great offices of state were intrusted to them as a favor, not as a right, — as simply servants of a royal master, whose interests they were required to defend. Some of them were allied by blood with the sovereign, and received marks of his special favor; but their authority was derived from him.

Richelieu was not unpatriotic. He wished to see France powerful, united, and prosperous; but powerful as a monarchy, united under a king, and prosperous for the benefit of the privileged orders, — not for the plebeian people, who toiled for supercilious masters. The people were of no account politically; were as unimportant as slaves, — to be protected in life and property, that they might thrive for the benefit of those who ruled them.

So when Richelieu became prime minister, and felt secure in his seat, — knowing how necessary to the King his services were, — he laid aside his amiable manners as a politician, and determined as a statesman to carry out remorselessly and rigidly his plans for the exaltation of the monarchy. And the moment he spoke at the council-board his genius predominated; all saw that a great power had arisen, that he was a master, and would be obeyed, and would execute his plans with no sentimentalities, but coldly, fixedly, like a man of blood and iron, indifferent to all obstacles. He was a man who could rule, and therefore,

on Carlyle's theory, a man who ought to rule, because he was strong.

There is something imposing, I grant, in this executive strength; it does not make a man interesting, but it makes him feared. Every ruler, — in fact every man intrusted with executive power, especially in stormy times, — should be resolute, unflinching, with a will dominating over everything, with courage, pluck, backbone, be he king or prime minister, or the superintendent of a railway, or director of a lunatic asylum, or president of a college. No matter whether the sphere be large or small, the administration of power requires energy, will, promptness of action, without favor and without fear. And if such a person rules well he will be respected; but if he rules unwisely, — if capricious, unjust, cruel, vindictive, — he may be borne for a while, until patience is exhausted and indignation becomes terrible: a passion of vengeance, like that which overthrew Strafford. Wise tyrants, like Peter and Frederic the Great, will be endured, from their devotion to public interests; but unwise tyrants, ruling for self-interest or pleasure, will be hurled from power, or assassinated like Nero or Commodus, as the only way to get rid of the miseries they inflict.

Now of the class of wise and enlightened tyrants was Richelieu. His greatness was in his will, sagacity, watchfulness, and devotion to public affairs. Factions

could not oust him, because he was strong; the King would not part with him, because he was faithful; posterity will not curse him, because he laid the foundation of the political greatness of his country.

I do not praise his system of government. On abstract principles I feel that it is against the liberties of mankind; nor is it in accordance with the progress of government in our modern times. All the successive changes which reforms and revolutions have wrought have been towards representative and constitutional governments, — as in England and France in the nineteenth century. Absolutism or Cæsarism is only adapted to people in primitive or anarchical states of society, — as in old Rome, or Rome under the popes. It is at the best a necessary tyranny, made so by the disorders and evils of life. It can be commended only when men are worse than governments; when they are to be coerced like wild beasts, or lunatics, or scoundrels. When there is universal plunder, lying, cheating, and murdering; when laws are a mockery, and when demagogues reign; when all public interests are scandalously sacrificed for private emolument, — then absolutism may for a time be necessary; but only for a time, unless we assume that men can never govern themselves.

In that state of society into which France was plunged during the regency of Marie de Médicis, and

at which I have glanced, absolutism was perhaps a needed force. Then Richelieu, its great modern representative, arose, — a model statesman in the eyes of Peter the Great.

But he was not to reign, and trample all other powers beneath his feet, without a memorable struggle. Three great forces were arrayed against him. These were the Huguenots, the nobles, and the parliaments, — the Protestant, the feudal, and the legal elements of society in France. The people, — at least the peasantry, — did not rise up against him; they were powerless and too unenlightened. The priests sustained him, and the common people acquiesced in his rigid rule, for he established law and order.

He began his labors in behalf of absolutism by suppressing the Huguenots. That was the only political party which was urgent for its rights. They were an intelligent party of tradesmen and small farmers; they were plebeian, but conscientious and aspiring. They were not contented alone to worship God according to the charter which Henry IV. had granted, but they sought political power; and they were so unfortunate as to be guilty of cabals and intrigues inconsistent with a central power. They were factious, and were not disposed to submit to legitimate authority. They had declined in numbers and influence; they had even degenerated in religious life; but they were still

After the painting by Henri Motte

RICHELIEU WATCHES THE SIEGE OPERATIONS FROM THE DAM AT ROCHELLE

powerful and dangerous foes. They had retreated to their strong fortress of La Rochelle, resolved, if attacked, to fight once again the whole power of the monarchy. They put themselves in a false position; they wanted more than the Edict of Nantes had guaranteed.

Unfortunately for them they had no leaders worthy to marshal their forces. Fashion and the influence of the court had seduced their men of rank; nor had they the enthusiasm which had secured victory at Ivry. Nor could they contend openly in the field; they were obliged to intrench themselves in an impregnable fortress: there they deemed they could defy their enemy. They even invoked the aid of England, and thus introduced foreign enemies on the soil of France, which was high-treason. They put themselves in the attitude of rebels against the government; and so long as English ships, with supplies, could go in and out of their harbor, they could not be conquered. Richelieu, clad in mail, a warrior-priest, surveyed with disgust their strong defences and their open harbor. His artillery was of no use, nor his lines of circumvallation. So he put his brain in motion, and studied Quintus Curtius. He remembered what Alexander did at the siege of Tyre; he constructed a vast dyke of stone and timber and iron across the harbor, in some places twelve hundred feet deep, and thus cut off all egress

and ingress. The English under Buckingham departed, unable to render further assistance. The capture then was only a work of time; genius had hemmed the city in, and famine soon did the rest. Cats, dogs, and vermin became luxuries. The starving women beseeched the inexorable enemy for permission to retire: they remembered the mercy that Henry IV. had shown at the siege of Paris. But war in the hands of masters has no favors to grant; conquerors have no tears. The Huguenots, as rebels, had no hope but in unconditional submission. They yielded it reluctantly, but not until famine had done its work. And they never raised their heads again; their spirit was broken. They were conquered, and at the mercy of the crown; destined in the next reign to be cruelly and most wantonly persecuted; hunted as heretics by dragonnades and executioners, at the bidding of Louis XIV., until four hundred thousand were executed or driven from the kingdom.

But Richelieu was not such a bigot as Louis XIV.; he was a statesman, and took enlightened views of the welfare of the country. Therefore he contented himself with destroying the fortifications of La Rochelle, filling up its ditches, and changing its government. He continued, in a modified form, the religious privileges conceded by the Edict of Nantes; but he kept a strict watch, humiliated the body by withholding civil

equalities and offices in the army and navy, treating with disdain their ministers, and taking away their social rank, so that they became plebeian and unimportant. He pursued the same course that the English government adopted in reference to Dissenters in the eighteenth century, when they were excluded from Oxford and Cambridge and church burial-grounds. So that Protestantism in France, after the fall of La Rochelle, never asserted its dignity, in spite of Bibles, consistories, and schools. Degraded at court, deprived of the great offices of the state, despised, rejected, and persecuted, it languished and declined.

Having subdued the Huguenots, Richelieu turned his attention to the nobles,— the most worthless, arrogant, and powerful of all the nobility of Europe; men who made royalty a mockery and law a name. I have alluded to their intrigues, ambition, and insolence. It was necessary that they should be humiliated, decimated, and punished, if central power was to be respected. So he cut off their towering heads, exiled and imprisoned them whenever they violated the laws, or threatened the security of the throne or the peace of the realm. As individuals they hated him, and conspired against his rule. Had they combined, they would have been more powerful than he; but they were too quarrelsome, envious, and short-sighted to combine.

The person who hated Richelieu most fiercely and bitterly was the Queen-mother, — widow of Henry IV., regent during the minority of Louis XIII. And no wonder, for he had cheated her and betrayed her. She was a very formidable enemy, having a great ascendency over the mind of her son the King; and once, it is said, she had so powerfully wrought upon him by her envenomed sarcasms, in the palace of the Luxembourg where she lived in royal state, that the King had actually taken the parchment in his hand to sign the disgrace of his minister. But he was watched by an eye that never slept; Richelieu suddenly appearing, at the critical moment, from behind the tapestries where he had concealed himself, fronted and defied his enemy. The King, bewildered, had not nerve enough to face his own servant, who however made him comprehend the dangers which surrounded his throne and person, and compelled him to part with his mother, — the only woman he ever loved, — and without permitting her to imprint upon his brow her own last farewell. "And the world saw the extraordinary spectacle of this once powerful Queen, the mother of a long line of kings, compelled to lead a fugitive life from court to court, — repulsed from England by her son-in-law, refused a shelter in Holland, insulted by Spain, neglected by Rome, and finally obliged to crave an asylum from Rubens the painter,

and, driven from one of his houses, forced to hide herself in Cologne, where, deserted by all her children, and so reduced by poverty as to break up the very furniture of her room for fuel, she perished miserably between four empty walls, on a wretched bed, destitute, helpless, heartbroken, and alone." Such was the power and such was the vengeance of the cardinal on the highest personage in France. Such was the dictation of a priest to a king who personally disliked him; such was his ascendency, not by Druidical weapons, but by genius presenting reasons of state.

The next most powerful personage in France was the Duke of Orleans, brother of the King, who sought to steal his sceptre. As he was detected in treasonable correspondence with Spain, he became a culprit, but was spared after making a humiliating confession and submission. But Condé, the first prince of the blood, was shut up in prison, and the powerful Duke of Guise was exiled. Richelieu took away from the Duke of Bouillon his sovereignty of Sedan; forced the proud Epernon to ask pardon on his knees; drove away from the kingdom the Duke of Vendôme, natural brother of the King; executed the Duke of Montmorency, whose family traced an unbroken lineage to Pharamond; confined Marshal Bassompierre to the Bastile; arrested Marshal Marillac at the head of a conquering army; cut off the head of Cinq-Mars, grand equerry and

favorite of the King; and executed on the scaffold the Counts of Chalais and Bouteville. All these men were among the proudest and most powerful nobles in Europe; they all lived like princes, and had princely revenues and grand offices, but had been caught with arms in their hands, or in treasonable correspondence. What hope for ordinary culprits when the proudest feudal nobles were executed or exiled, like common malefactors? Neither rank nor services could screen them from punishment. The great minister had no mercy and no delay even for the favorites of royalty. Nay, the King himself became his puppet, and was forced to part with his friends, his family, his mistresses, and his pleasures. Some of the prime ministers of kings have had as much power as Richelieu, but no minister, before or since, has ruled the monarch himself with such an iron sway. How weak the King, or how great the minister!

The third great force which Richelieu crushed was the parliament of Paris. It had the privilege of registering the decrees of the King; and hence was a check, the only check, on royal authority, — unless the King came in person into the assembly, and enforced his decree by what was called a "bed of justice." This body, however, was judicial rather than legislative; made up of pedantic and aristocratic lawyers, who could be troublesome. We get some idea of the humiliation

of this assembly of lawyers and nobles from the speech of Omer Talon, — the greatest lawyer of the realm, — when called upon to express the sentiments of his illustrious body to the King, at a "bed of justice": "Happy should we be, most gracious sovereign, if we could obtain any favor worthy of the honor which we derive from your majesty's presence; but the entry of your sacred person into our assembly unfits us for our functions. And inasmuch as the throne on which you are seated is a light that dazzles us, bow, if it please you, the heavens which you inhabit, and after the example of the Eternal Sovereign, whose image you bear, condescend to visit us with your gracious mercy."

What a contrast to this servile speech was the conduct of the English parliament about this time, in its memorable resistance to Charles I.; and how different would have been the political destinies of the English people, if Strafford, just such a man as Richelieu, had succeeded in his schemes! But in England the parliament was backed by the nation, — at least by the middle classes. In France the people had then no political aspirations; among them a Cromwell could not have arisen, since a Cromwell could not have been sustained.

Thus Richelieu, by will and genius, conquered all his foes in order to uphold the throne, and thus elevate the nation; for, as Sir James Stephen says, "the grandeur

of the monarchy and the welfare of France with him were but convertible terms." He made the throne the first in Europe, even while he who sat upon it was personally contemptible. He gave lustre to the monarchy, while he himself was an unarmed priest. It was a splendid fiction to make the King nominally so powerful, while really he was so feeble. But royalty was not a fiction under his successor. How respectable did Richelieu make the monarchy! What a deep foundation did he lay for royalty under Louis XIV.! What a magnificent inheritance did he bequeath to that monarch! "Nothing was done for forty years which he had not foreseen and prepared. His successor, Mazarin, only prospered so far as he followed out his instructions; and the star of Louis XIV. did not pale so long as the policy which Richelieu bequeathed was the rule of his public acts." The magnificence of Louis was only the sequel of the energy and genius of Richelieu; Versailles was really the gift of him who built the Palais Royal.

The services of Richelieu to France did not end with centralizing power around the throne. He enlarged the limits of the kingdom and subdued her foreign enemies. Great rivers and mountains became the national boundaries, within which it was easy to preserve conquests. He was not ambitious of foreign domination; he simply wished to make the kingdom impregnable. Had

Napoleon pursued this policy, he could never have been overthrown, and his dynasty would have been established. It was the policy of Elizabeth and of Cromwell. I do not say that Richelieu did not enter upon foreign wars; but it was to restore the "balance of power," not to add kingdoms to the empire. He rendered assistance to Gustavus Adolphus, in spite of the protests of Rome and the disgust of Catholic powers, in order to prevent the dangerous ascendency of Austria; thus setting an example for William III., and Pitt himself, in his warfare against Napoleon. In these days we should prefer to see the "balance of power" maintained by a congress of nations, rather than by vast military preparations and standing armies, which eat out the resources of nations; but in the seventeenth century there was no other way to maintain this balance than by opposing armies. Nor did Richelieu seek to maintain the peace of Europe by force alone. Never was there a more astute and profound diplomatist. His emissaries were in every court, with intrigues very hard to be baffled. He equalled Metternich or Talleyrand in his profound dissimulation, for European diplomacy has ever been based on this. While he built up absolutism in France, he did not alienate other governments; so that, like Cromwell, he made his nation respected abroad. His conquest of Roussillon prepared the way for the famous Treaty of the Pyrenees, under the

administration of Mazarin. While vigorous in war, his policy was on the whole pacific, — like that of all Catholic priests who have held power in France. He loved glory indeed, but, like Sully and Colbert, he also wished to develop the national resources; and, as indeed all enlightened statesmen from Moses downward have sought to do, he wished to make the country strong for defence rather than offence.

He showed great sagacity as well as an enlightened mind. The ablest men were placed in office. The army and navy were reorganized. Corruption and peculation on the part of officials were severely punished. The royal revenue was increased. Roads, bridges, canals were built and repaired, and public improvements were made. The fine arts were encouraged, and even learning was rewarded. It was he who founded the French Academy, — although he excluded from it men of original genius whose views he did not like. Law and order were certainly restored, and anarchy ceased to reign. The rights of property were established, and the finances freed from embarrassments.

So his rigid rule tended to the elevation of France; absolutism proved necessary in his day, and under his circumstances. When arraigned at the bar of posterity, he claims, like Napoleon, to be judged for his services, and not for his defects of character. These defects will forever make him odious in spite of his services. I

hardly know a more repulsive benefactor. He was vain, cold, heartless, rigid, and proud. He had no amiable weakness. His smile was a dagger, and his friendship was a snare. He was a hypocrite and a tyrant. He had no pity on a fallen foe; and even when bending under the infirmities of age, and in the near prospect of death, his inexorable temper was never for a moment subdued. The execution of Cinq-Mars and De Thou took place when he had one foot in his grave. He deceived everybody, sent his spies into the bosom of families, and made expediency the law of his public life.

But it is nothing to the philosophic student of history that he built the Palais Royal, or squandered riches with Roman prodigality, or rewarded players, or enriched Marion Delorme, or clad himself in mail before La Rochelle, or persecuted his early friends, or robbed the monasteries, or made a spy of Father Joseph, or exiled the Queen-mother, or kept the King in bondage, or sent his enemies to the scaffold: these things are all against him, and make him appear in a repulsive light. But if he brought order out of confusion, and gave a blow to feudalism, and destroyed anarchies, and promoted law, and developed the resources of his country, making that country formidable and honorable, and constructed a vast machinery of government by which France was kept together for a century, and

would have fallen to pieces without it, — then there is another way to survey this bad man; and we view him not only as a great statesman and ruler, but as an instrument of Providence, raised up as a terror to evil-doers. We may hate absolutism, but must at the same time remember that there are no settled principles of government, any more than of political economy. That is the best government which is best adapted to the exigency of that human society which at the time it serves. Republicanism would not do in China, any more than despotism in New England. Bad men, somehow or other, must be coerced and punished. The more prevalent is depravity, so much the more necessary is despotic vigor: it will be so to the end of time. It is all nonsense to dream of liberty with a substratum of folly and vice. Unless evils can be remedied by the public itself, giving power to the laws which the people create, then physical force, hard and cold tyranny, must inevitably take the place. No country will long endure anarchy; and then the hardest characters may prove the greatest benefactors.

It is on this principle that I am reconciled to the occasional rule of despots. And when I see a bad man, like Richelieu, grasping power to be used for the good of a nation, I have faith to believe it to be ordered wisely. When men are good and honest and brave, we shall have Washingtons; when they are selfish

and lawless, God will send Richelieus and Napoleons, if He has good things in store for the future, even as He sends Neros and Diocletians when a nation is doomed to destruction by incurable rottenness.

And yet absolutism in itself is not to be defended; it is what enlightened nations are now striving to abolish. It is needed only under certain circumstances; if it were to be perpetuated in any nation it would be Satanic. It is endurable only because it may be destroyed when it has answered its end; and, like all human institutions, it will become corrupted. It was shamefully abused under Louis XIV. and Louis XV. But when corrupted and abused it has, like slavery, all the elements of certain decay and ruin. The abuse of power will lead to its own destruction, even as undue haste in the acquisition of riches tendeth to poverty.

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OLIVER CROMWELL.

A. D. 1599–1658.

ENGLISH REVOLUTION.

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THE most difficult character in history to treat critically, and the easiest to treat rhetorically, perhaps, is Oliver Cromwell; after two centuries and more he is still a puzzle: his name, like that of Napoleon, is a doubt. Some regard him with unmingled admiration; some detest him as a usurper; and many look upon him as a hypocrite. Nobody questions his ability; and his talents were so great that some bow down to him on that account, out of reverence for strength, like Carlyle. On the whole he is a popular idol, not for his strength, but for his cause, since he represents the progressive party in his day in behalf of liberty, — at least until his protectorate began. Then new issues arose; and while he appeared as a great patriot and enlightened ruler, he yet reigned as an absolute monarch, basing his power on a standing army.

But whatever may be said of Cromwell as statesman,

general, or ruler, his career was remarkable and exceedingly interesting. His character, too, was unique and original; hence we are never weary of discussing him. In studying his character and career, we also have our minds directed to the great ideas of his tumultuous and agitated age, for he, like Napoleon, was the product of revolution. He was the offspring of mighty ideas,— he did not create them; original thinkers set them in motion, as Rousseau enunciated the ideas which led to the French Revolution. The great thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were divines, the men whom the Reformation produced. It was Luther preaching the right of private judgment, and Calvin pushing out the doctrine of the majesty of God to its remotest logical sequence, and Latimer appealing to every man's personal responsibility to God, and Gustavus Adolphus fighting for religious liberty, and the Huguenots protesting against religious persecution, and Thomas Cromwell sweeping away the abominations of the Papacy, and the Geneva divines who settled in England during the reign of Elizabeth, — it was all these that produced Oliver Cromwell.

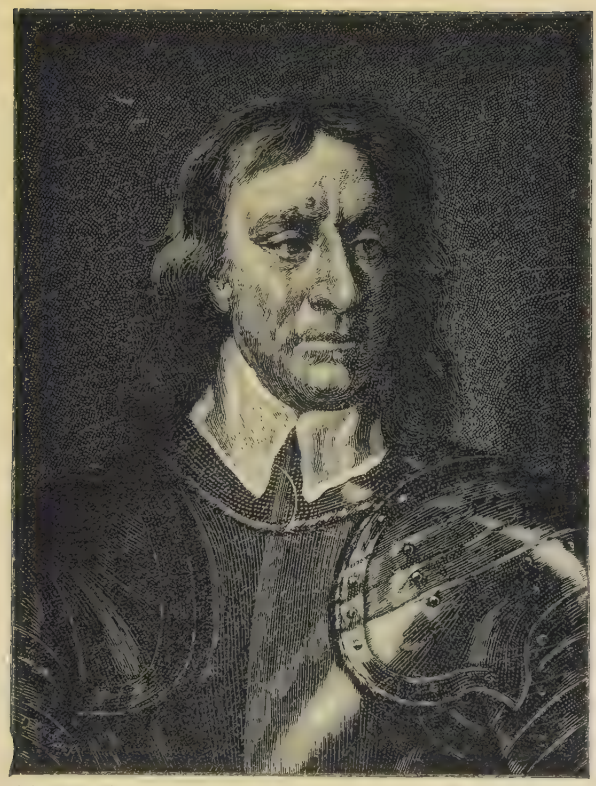
He was a Puritan, and hence he was a reformer, not in church matters merely, but in all those things which are connected with civil liberty, — for there is as close a connection between Protestantism and liberty as between Catholicism and absolutism. The Puritans

intensely hated everything which reminded them of Rome, even the holidays of the Church, organs, stained-glass, cathedrals, and the rich dresses of the clergy. They even tried to ignore Christmas and Easter, though consecrated by the early Church. They hated the Middle Ages, looked with disgust upon the past, and longed to try experiments, not only in religion, but in politics and social life. The only antiquity which had authority to them was the Jewish Commonwealth, because it was a theocracy, and recognized God Almighty as the supreme ruler of the world. Hence they adhered to the strictness of the Jewish Sabbath, and baptized their children with Hebrew names.

Now to such a people, stern, lofty, ascetic, legal, spiritual, — conservative of whatever the Bible reveals, yet progressive and ardent for reforms, — the rule of the Stuarts was intolerable. It was intolerable because it seemed to lean towards Catholicism, and because it was tyrannical and averse to changes. The King was ruled by favorites; and these favorites were either bigots in religion, like Archbishop Laud, or were tyrannical or unscrupulous in their efforts to sustain the King in despotic measures and crush popular agitations, like the Earl of Strafford, or were men of pleasure and vanity like the Duke of Buckingham. Charles I. was detested by the Puritans even more than his father James. They looked upon him as more than half a Papist, a

despot, utterly insincere, indifferent to the welfare of the country, intent only on exalting himself and his throne at the expense of the interests of the people, whose aspirations he scorned and whose rights he trampled upon. In his eyes they had no *rights*, only *duties;* and duties to him as an anointed sovereign, to rule as he liked, with parliaments or without parliaments; yea, to impose taxes arbitrarily, and grant odious monopolies: for the State was his, to be managed as a man would manage a farm; and those who resisted this encroachment on the liberties of the nation were to be fined, imprisoned, executed, as pestilent disturbers of the public peace. He would form dangerous alliances with Catholic powers, marry his children to Catholic princes, appoint Catholics to high office, and compromise the dignity of the nation as a Protestant State. His ministers, his judges, his high officials were simply his tools, and perpetually insulted the nation by their arrogance, their venality, and their shameful disregard of the Constitution. In short, he seemed bent on imposing a tyrannical yoke, hard to be endured, and to punish unlawfully those who resisted it, or even murmured against it. He would shackle the press, and muzzle the members of parliament.

Thus did this King appear to the Puritans, — at this time a large and influential party, chiefly Presbyterian, and headed by many men of rank and character, all



After the painting by Pieter Van der Plaas (usually attributed to Sir Peter Lely), Uffizi, Florence

OLIVER CROMWELL

of whom detested the Roman Catholic religion as the source of all religious and political evils, and who did not scruple to call the Papacy by the hardest names, such as the "Scarlet Mother," "Antichrist," and the like. They had seceded from the Established Church in the reign of Elizabeth, and became what was then called Non-conformists. Had they been treated wisely, had any respect been shown to their opinions and rights, — for the right of worshipping God according to individual conscience is the central and basal pillar of Protestantism, — had this undoubted right of private judgment, the great emancipating idea of that age, been respected, the Puritans would have sought relief in constitutional resistance, for they were conservative and loyal, as English people ever have been, even in Canada and Australia. They were not bent on *revolution;* they only desired *reform.* So their representatives in Parliament framed the famous "Petition of Right," in which were reasserted the principles of constitutional liberty. This earnest, loyal, but angry Parliament, being troublesome, was dissolved, and Charles undertook for eleven years to reign without one, — against all precedents, — with Strafford and Laud for his chief advisers and ministers. He reigned by Star Chamber decrees, High-commission courts, issuing proclamations, resorting to forced loans, tampering with justice, removing judges, imprisoning obnoxious

men without trial, insulting and humiliating the Puritans, and openly encouraging a religion of "millineries and upholsteries," not only illegally, but against the wishes and sentiments of the better part of the nation,— thus undermining his own throne; for all thrones are based on the love of the people.

The financial difficulties of the King — for the most absolute of kings cannot extort *all* the money they want — compelled him to assemble another Parliament at an alarming crisis of popular indignation which he did not see, when popular leaders began to say that even kings must rule *by* the people and not *without* the people.

This new Parliament, with Hampden and Pym for leaders, though fierce and aggressive, would have been contented with constitutional reform, like Mirabeau at one period. But the King, ill-advised, obstinate, blinded, would not accept reform; he would reign like the Bourbons, or not at all. The reforms which the Parliament desired were reasonable and just. It would abolish arbitrary arrests, the Star Chamber decrees, taxes without its consent, cruelty to Nonconformists, the ascendency of priests, irresponsible ministers, and offensive symbols of Romanism. If these reforms had been granted, — and such a sovereign as Elizabeth would have yielded, however reluctantly, — there would have been no English revo-

lution. Or even if the popular leaders had been more patient, and waited for their time, and been willing to carry out these reforms constitutionally, there would have been no revolution. But neither the King nor Parliament would yield, and the Parliament was dissolved.

The next Parliament was not only angry, it was defiant and unscrupulous. It resolved on revolution, and determined to put the King himself aside. It began with vigorous measures, and impeached both Laud and Strafford, — doubtless very able men, but not fitted for their times. It decreed sweeping changes, usurped the executive authority, appealed to arms, and made war on the government. The King also on his part appealed to the sword, which now alone could settle the difficulties. The contest was inevitable. The nation clamored for reform; the King would not grant it; the Parliament would not wait to secure it constitutionally. Both parties were angry and resolute; reason departed from the councils of the nation; passion now ruled, and civil war began. It was not, at first, a question about the form of government, — whether a king or an elected ruler should bear sway; it was purely a question of reforms in the existing government, limiting of course the power of the King, — but reforms deemed so vital to the welfare of the nation that the best people were willing to shed their blood to secure them; and

if reason and moderation could have borne sway, that angry strife might have been averted. But people will not listen to reason in times of maddening revolution; they prefer to fight, and run their chances and incur the penalty. And when contending parties appeal to the sword, then all ordinary rules are set aside, and success belongs to the stronger, and the victors exact what they please. The rules of all deadly and desperate warfare seem to recognize this.

The fortune of war put the King into the hands of the revolutionists; and in fear, more than in vengeance, they executed him, — just what he would have done to *their* leaders if *he* had won. "Stone-dead," said Falkland, "hath no fellow." In a national conflagration we lose sight of laws, even of written constitutions. Great necessities compel extraordinary measures, not such as are sustained either by reason or precedents. The great lesson of war, especially of civil war, is, that contending parties might better make great concessions than resort to it, for it is certain to demoralize a nation. Heated partisans hate compromise; yet war itself generally ends in compromise. It is interesting to see how many constitutions, how many institutions in both Church and State, are based on compromise.

Now, it was amid all the fierce contentions of that revolutionary age, — an age of intense earnestness,

when the grandest truths were agitated; an age of experiment, of bold discussions, of wild fanaticisms, of bitter hatreds, of unconquerable prejudices, yet of great loftiness and spiritual power, — that the star of Oliver Cromwell arose. He was born in the year 1599, of a good family. He was a country squire, a gentleman farmer, though not much given to fox-hunting or dinner hilarities, preferring to read political pamphlets, or to listen to long sermons, or to hold discussions on grace, predestination, free-will, and foreknowledge absolute. His favorite doctrine was the second coming of Christ and the reign of the saints, the elect, — to whom of course he belonged. He had visions and rhapsodies, and believed in special divine illumination. Cromwell was not a Presbyterian, but an Independent; and the Independents were the most advanced party of his day, both in politics and religion. The progressive man of that age was a Calvinist, in all the grandeur and in all the narrowness of that unfashionable and misunderstood creed. The time had not come for "advanced thinkers" to repudiate a personal God and supernatural agencies. Then an atheist, or even a deist, and indeed a materialist of the school of Democritus and Lucretius, was unknown. John Milton was one of the representative men of the Puritans of the seventeenth century, — men who colonized New England, and planted the germs of institutions which have spread to the Rocky Mountains.

Cromwell on his farm, one of the landed gentry, had a Cambridge education, and was early an influential man. His sagacity, his intelligence, his honesty, and his lofty religious life marked him out as a fit person to represent his county in parliament. He at once became the associate of such men as Hampden and Pym. He did not make very graceful speeches, and he had an ungainly person; but he was eloquent in a rude way, since he had strong convictions and good sense. He was probably violent, for he hated the abuses of the times, and he hated Rome and the prelacy. He represented the extreme left; that is, he was a radical, and preferred revolution to tyranny. Yet even he would probably have accepted reform if reform had been possible without violence. But Cromwell had no faith in the King or his ministers, and was inclined to summary measures. He afterwards showed this tendency of character in his military career. He was one of those earnest and practical people who could not be fooled with. So he became a leader of those who were most violent against the Government. During the Long Parliament, Cromwell sat for Cambridge; which fact shows that he was then a marked man, far from being unimportant. This was the Parliament, assembled in 1640, which impeached Strafford and Laud, which abolished the Star Chamber, and inaugurated the civil war, that began when Charles

left Whitehall, January, 1642, for York. The Parliament solicited contributions, called out the militia, and appointed to the command of the forces the Earl of Essex, a Presbyterian, who established his headquarters at Northampton, while Charles unfurled the royal standard at Nottingham.

Cromwell was forty-two when he buckled on his sword as a volunteer. He subscribed five hundred pounds to the cause of liberty, raised a troop of horse, which gradually swelled into that famous regiment of one thousand men, called "Ironsides," which was never beaten. Of this regiment he was made colonel in the spring of 1643. He had distinguished himself at Edgehill in the first year of the war, but he drew upon himself the eyes of the nation at the battle of Marston Moor, July, 1644, — gained by the discipline of his men, — which put the north of England into the hands of Parliament. He was then lieutenant-general, second in command to the Earl of Manchester. The second battle of Newbury, though a success, gave Cromwell, then one of the most influential members of Parliament, an occasion to complain of the imbecility of the noblemen who controlled the army, and who were Presbyterians. The "self-denying ordinance," which prohibited members of Parliament from command in the army, was a blow at Presbyterianism and aristocracy, and marked the growing power of the Independents. It

was planned by Cromwell, although it would have deprived him also of his command; but he was made an exception to the rule, and he knew he would be, since his party could not spare him.

Then was fought the battle of Naseby, June 14, 1645, in which Cromwell commanded the right wing of the army, Fairfax (nominally his superior general) the centre, and Ireton the left; against Prince Rupert and Charles. The battle was won by the bravery of Cromwell, and decided the fortunes of the King, although he was still able to keep the field. Cromwell now became the foremost man in England. For two years he resided chiefly in London, taking an important part in negotiations with the King, and in the contest between the Independents and Presbyterians, — the former of which represented the army, while the latter still had the ascendency in Parliament.

On the 16th of August, 1648, was fought the battle of Preston, in which Cromwell defeated the Scotch army commanded by the Duke of Hamilton, which opened Edinburgh to his victorious troops, and made him commander-in-chief of the armies of the Commonwealth. The Presbyterians, at least of Scotland, it would seem, preferred now the restoration of the King to the ascendency of Cromwell with the army to back him, for it was the army and not the Parliament which had given him supreme command.

Then followed the rapid conquest of the Scots, the return of the victorious general to London, and the suppression of the liberty of Parliament, for it was purged of its Presbyterian leaders. The ascendency of the Independents began; for though in a minority, they were backed by an army which obeyed implicitly the commands and even the wishes of Cromwell.

The great tragedy which disgraced the revolution was now acted. The unfortunate King, whose fate was sealed at the battle of Naseby, after various vicissitudes and defeats, put himself into the hands of the Scots and made a league with the Presbyterians. After Edinburgh was taken, they virtually sold him to the victor, who caused him to be brought in bitter mockery to Hampton Court, where he was treated with ironical respect. In his reverses Charles would have made *any* concessions; and the Presbyterians, who first took up arms against him, would perhaps have accepted them. But it was too late. Cromwell and the Independents now reigned, — a party that had been driven into violent measures, and which had sought the subversion of the monarchy itself.

Charles is brought to a mock trial by a decimated Parliament, is condemned and executed, and the old monarchy is supplanted by a military despotism. "The roaring conflagration of anarchies" is succeeded by the rule of the strongest man.

Much has been written and said about that execution, or martyrdom, or crime, as it has been variously viewed by partisans. It simply was the sequence of the revolution, of the appeal of both parties to the sword. It may have been necessary or unnecessary, a blunder or a crime, but it was the logical result of a bitter war; it was the cruel policy of a conquering power. Those who supported it were able men, who deemed it the wisest thing to do; who dreaded a reaction, who feared for themselves, and sought by this means to perpetuate their sway. As one of the acts of revolution, it must be judged by the revolution itself. The point is, not whether it was wrong to take the life of the King, if it were a military necessity, or seemed to be to the great leaders of the day, but whether it was right to take up arms in defence of rights which might have been gained by protracted constitutional agitation and resistance. The execution proved a blunder, because it did not take away the rights of Charles II., and created great abhorrence and indignation, not merely in foreign countries, but among a majority of the English people themselves, — and these, too, who had the prestige of wealth and culture. I do not believe the Presbyterian party, as represented by Hampden and Pym, and who like Mirabeau had applied the torch to revolutionary passions, would have consented to this foolish murder. Certainly the Episcopalians would not

have executed Charles, even if they could have been induced to cripple him.

But war is a conflagration; nothing can stop its ravages when it has fairly begun. They who go to war must abide the issue of war; they who take the sword must be prepared to perish by the sword. Thus far, in the history of the world, very few rights have been gained by civil war which could not have been gained in the end without it. The great rights which the people have secured in England for two hundred years are the result of an appeal to reason and justice. The second revolution was bloodless. The Parliament which first arrayed itself against the government of Charles was no mean foe, even if it had not resorted to arms. It held the purse-strings; it had the power to cripple the King, and to worry him into concessions. But if the King was resolved to attack the Parliament itself, and coerce it by a standing army, and destroy all liberty in England, then the question assumed another shape; the war then became defensive, and was plainly justifiable, and Charles could but accept the issue, even his own execution, if it seemed necessary to his conquerors. They took up arms in self-defence, and war, of course, brought to light the energies and talents of the greatest general, who as victor would have his reward. Cromwell concluded to sweep away the old monarchy, and reign himself

instead; and the execution of the King was one of his war measures. It was the penalty Charles paid for making war on his subjects, instead of ruling them according to the laws. His fate was hard and sad; we feel more compassion than indignation. In our times he would have been permitted to run away; but those stern and angry old revolutionists demanded his blood.

For this cruel or necessary act Cromwell is responsible more than any man in England, since he could have prevented it if he pleased. He ruled the army, which ruled the Parliament. It was not the nation, or the representatives of the nation, who decreed the execution of Charles. It was the army and the purged Parliament, composed chiefly of Independents, who wanted the subversion of the monarchy itself. Technically, Charles was tried by the Parliament, or the judges appointed by them; really, Cromwell was at the bottom of the affair, as much as John Calvin was responsible for the burning of Servetus, let partisans say what they please. There never has a great crime or blunder been committed on this earth which bigoted, or narrow, or zealous partisans have not attempted to justify. Bigoted Catholics have justified even the slaughter of St. Bartholomew. Partisans have no law but expediency. All jesuits, political, religious, and social, in the Catholic and Protestant

churches alike, seem to think that the end justifies the means, even in the most beneficent reforms; and when pushed to the wall by the logic of opponents, will fall back on the examples of the Old Testament. In defence of lying and cheating they will quote Abraham at the court of Pharaoh. There is no insult to the human understanding more flagrant, than the doctrine that we may do evil that good may come. And yet the politics and reforms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seem to have been based on that miserable form of jesuitism. Here Machiavelli is as vulnerable as Escobar, and Burleigh as well as Oliver Cromwell, who was not more profound in dissimulation than Queen Elizabeth herself. The best excuse we can render for the political and religious crimes of that age is, that they were in accordance with its ideas. And who is superior to the ideas of his age?

On the execution of the King, the supreme authority was nominally in the hands of Parliament. Of course all kinds of anarchies prevailed, and all government was unsettled. Charles II. was proclaimed King by the Scots, while the Duke of Ormond, in Ireland, joined the royal party to seat Charles II. on the throne. In this exigency Cromwell was appointed by the Parliament Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

Then followed the conquest of Ireland, in which

Cromwell distinguished himself for great military abilities. His vigorous and uncompromising measures, especially his slaughter of the garrison of Drogheda (a retaliatory act), have been severely commented on. But war in the hands of masters is never carried on sentimentally: the test of ability is success. The measures were doubtless hard and severe; but Cromwell knew what he was about: he wished to bring the war to a speedy close, and intimidation was probably the best course to pursue. Those impracticable Irish never afterwards molested him. In less than a year he was at leisure to oppose Charles II. in Scotland; and on the resignation of Fairfax he was made Captain-General of all the forces in the empire. The battle of Dunbar resulted in the total defeat of the Scots; while the "crowning mercy" at Worcester, Sept. 3, 1651, utterly blasted the hopes of Charles, and completely annihilated his forces.

The civil war, which raged nine years, was now finished, and Cromwell became supreme. But even the decimated Parliament was jealous, and raised an issue,—on which Cromwell dissolved it with a file of soldiers, and assembled another, neither elective nor representative, composed of his creatures, without experience, chiefly Anabaptists and Independents; which he soon did away with. He then called a council of leading men, who made him Lord Protector, December 13,

1653. Even the shadow of constitutional authority now vanishes, and Cromwell rules with absolute and untrammelled power, like Julius Cæsar or Napoleon Bonaparte. He rules on the very principles which he condemned in Charles I. The revolution ends in a military despotism.

If there was ever a usurpation, this was one. Liberty gave her last sigh on the remonstrance of Sir Harry Vane, and a military hero, by means of his army, stamps his iron heel on England. He dissolves the very body from which he received his own authority he refuses to have any check on his will; he imposes taxes without the consent of the people, — the very thing for which he took up arms against Charles I.; he reigns alone, on despotic principles, as absolute as Louis XIV.; he enshrouds himself in royal state at Hampton Court; he even seeks to bequeath his absolute power to his son. And if Richard Cromwell had reigned like his father Oliver, then the cause of liberty would have been lost.

All this is cold, unvarnished history. We cannot get over or around these facts; they blaze out to the eyes of all readers, and will blaze to the most distant ages. Cromwell began as a reformer, but ended as a usurper. Whatever name he goes by, whatever title he may have assumed, he became, by force of his victories and of his army, the absolute ruler of England, — as

Cæsar did of Rome, and Napoleon of Paris. We may palliate or extenuate this fact; we may even excuse it on the ground that the State had drifted into anarchy; that only he, as the stronger man, could save England; that there was no other course open to him as a patriot; and that it was a most fortunate thing for England that he seized the reins, and became a tyrant to put down anarchies. But whatever were the excuses by which Cromwell justified himself, or his admirers justify him, let us not deny the facts. It may have been necessary, under his circumstances, to reign alone, by the aid of his standing army. But do not attempt to gloss over the veritable fact that he did reign without the support of Parliament, and in defiance of all constitutional authorities. It was not the nation which elevated him to supreme power, but his soldiers. At no time would any legitimate Parliament, or any popular voice, have made him an absolute ruler. He could not even have got a plebiscitum, as Louis Napoleon did. He was not liked by the nation at large, — not even by the more enlightened and conservative of the Puritans, such as the Presbyterians; and as for the Episcopalians, they looked upon him not only as a usurper but as a hypocrite.

It is difficult to justify such an act as usurpation and military tyranny by the standard of an immutable morality. If the overturning of all constitutional

authority by a man who professed to be a reformer, yet who reigned illegally as a despot, can be defended, it is only on the principle of expediency, that the end justifies the means, — the plea of the Jesuits, and of all the despots who have overturned constitutions and national liberties. But this is rank and undisguised Cæsarism. The question then arises, Was it necessary that a Cæsar should reign at Hampton Court? Some people think it was; and all admit that after the execution of the King there was no settled government, nothing but bitter, intolerant factions, each of which wished its own ascendency, and all were alike unscrupulous. Revolution ever creates factions and angry parties, more or less violent. It is claimed by many that a good government was impossible with these various and contending parties, and that nothing but anarchy would have existed had not Cromwell seized the reins, and sustained himself by a standing army, and ruled despotically. Again, others think that he was urged by a pressure which even he could not resist, — that of the army; that he was controlled by circumstances; that he could do no otherwise unless he resigned England to her fate, — to the anarchy of quarrelling and angry parties, who would not listen to reason, and who were too inexperienced to govern in such stormy times. The Episcopalians certainly, and the Presbyterians probably, would have restored

Charles II., — and this Cromwell regarded as a great possible calamity. If the King had been restored, all the fruit of the revolution would have been lost; there would have been a renewed reign of frivolities, insincerities, court scandals, venalities, favorites, and disguised Romanism, — yea, an alliance would have been formed with the old tyrants of Europe.

Cromwell was no fool, and he had a great insight into the principles on which the stability and prosperity of a nation rested. He doubtless felt that the nation required a strong arm at the helm, and that no one could save England in such a storm but himself. I believe he was sincere in this conviction, — a conviction based on profound knowledge of men and the circumstances of the age. I believe he was willing to be aspersed, even by his old friends, and heartily cursed by his enemies, if he could guide the ship of state into a safe harbor. I am inclined to believe that he was patriotic in his intentions; that he wished to save the country even, if necessary, by illegal means; that he believed there was a higher law *for him*, and that an enlightened posterity would vindicate his name and memory. He was not deceived as to his abilities, even if he were as to his call. He knew he was the strongest man in England, and that only the strongest could rule. He was willing to assume the responsibility, whatever violence he should do to his early princi-

ples, or to the opinions of those with whom he was at first associated. If there was anything that marked the character of Cromwell, it was the abiding sense, from first to last, of his personal responsibility to God Almighty, whose servant and instrument he felt himself to be. I believe he was loyal to his conscience, if not to his cause. He may have committed grave errors, for he was not infallible. It may have been an error that he ruled virtually without a Parliament, since it was better that a good measure should be defeated than that the cause of liberty should be trodden under foot. It was better that parliaments should wrangle and quarrel than that there should be no representation of the nation at all. And it was an undoubted error to transmit his absolute authority to his son, for this was establishing a new dynasty of kings. One of the worst things which Napoleon ever did was to seat his brothers on the old thrones of Europe. Doubtless, Cromwell wished to perpetuate the policy of his government, but he had no right to perpetuate a despotism in his own family: that was an insult to the nation and to the cause of constitutional liberty. Here he was selfish and ambitious, for, great as he was, he was not greater than the nation or his cause.

But I need not dwell on the blunders of Cromwell, if we call them by no harsher name. It would be harsh to judge him for his mistakes or sins under his peculiar

circumstances, his hand in the execution of Charles I., his jesuitical principles, his cruelties in Ireland, his dispersion of parliaments, and his usurpation of supreme power. Only let us call things by their right names; we gain nothing by glossing over defects. The historians of the Bible tell us how Abraham told lies to the King of Egypt, and David caused Uriah to be slain after he had appropriated his wife. Yet who were greater and better, upon the whole, than these favorites of Heaven?

Cromwell earned his great fame as one of the wisest statesmen and ablest rulers that England ever had. Like all monarchs, he is to be judged by the services he rendered to civilization. He was not a faultless man, but he proved himself a great benefactor. Whether we like him or not, we are compelled to admit that his administration was able and beneficent, and that he seemed to be actuated by a sincere desire to do all the good he could. If he was ambitious, his ambition was directed to the prosperity and glory of his country. If he levied taxes without the consent of the nation, he spent the money economically, wisely, and unselfishly. He sought no inglorious pomps; he built no expensive palaces; he gave no foolish fêtes; nor did he seek to disguise his tyranny by amusing or demoralizing the people, like the old Roman Cæsars. He would even have established a constitutional monarchy, had it been

practicable. The plots of royalists tempted him to appoint major-generals to responsible situations. To protect his life, he resorted to guards. He could not part with his power, but he used it for the benefit of the nation. If he did not reign by or through the people, he reigned *for* the people. He established religious liberty, and tolerated all sects but Catholics and Quakers. The Presbyterians were his enemies, but he never persecuted them. He had a great regard for law, and appointed the ablest and best men to high judicial positions. Sir Matthew Hale, whom he made chief-justice, was the greatest lawyer in England, an ornament to any country. Cromwell made strenuous efforts to correct the abuses of the court of chancery and of criminal law. He established trial by jury for political offences. He tried to procure the formal re-admission of the Jews to England. He held conferences with George Fox. He snatched Biddle, the Socinian, from the fangs of persecutors. He fostered commerce and developed the industrial resources of the nation, like Burleigh and Colbert. He created a navy, and became the father of the maritime greatness of England. He suppressed all license among the soldiers, although his power rested on their loyalty to him. He honored learning and exalted the universities, placing in them learned men. He secured the union between England and Scotland, and called representatives from Scotland

to his parliaments. He adopted a generous policy with the colonies in North America, and freed them from rapacious governors. His war policy was not for mere aggrandizement. He succeeded Gustavus Adolphus as the protector of Protestantism on the Continent. He sought to make England respected among all the nations; and, as righteousness exalts a nation, he sought to maintain public morality. His court was simple and decorous; he gave no countenance to levities and follies, and his own private life was pure and religious, — so that there was general admiration of his conduct as well as of his government.

Cromwell was certainly very fortunate in his régime. The army and navy did wonders; Blake and Monk gained great victories; Gibraltar was taken, — one of the richest prizes that England ever gained in war. The fleets of Spain were destroyed; the trade of the Indies was opened to his ships. He maintained the "balance of power." He punished the African pirates of the Mediterranean. His glory reached Asia, and extended to America. So great was his renown that the descendants of Abraham, even on the distant plains of Asia, inquired of one another if he were not the servant of the King of Kings, whom they were looking for. A learned Rabbi even came from Asia to London for the purpose of investigating his pedigree, thinking to discover in him the "Lion of the

From the painting by J. Schrader

CROMWELL IN WHITEHALL

tribe of Judah." If his policy had been followed out by his successors, Louis XIV. would not have dared to revoke the Edict of Nantes; if he had reigned ten years longer, there would have been no revival of Romanism. I suppose England never had so enlightened a monarch. He was more like Charlemagne than Richelieu. Contrast him with Louis XIV., a contemporaneous despot: Cromwell devoted all his energies to develop the resources of his country, while Louis did what he could to waste them; Cromwell's reign was favorable to the development of individual genius, but Louis was such an intolerable egotist that at the close of his reign all the great lights had disappeared; Cromwell was tolerant, Louis was persecuting; Cromwell laid the foundation of an indefinite expansion, Louis sowed the seeds of discontent and revolution. Both indeed took the sword, — the one to dethrone the Stuarts, the other to exterminate the Protestants. Cromwell bequeathed to successors the moral force of personal virtue, Louis paved the way for the most disgraceful excesses; Cromwell spent his leisure hours with his family and with divines, Louis with his favorites and mistresses; Cromwell would listen to expostulations, Louis crushed all who differed from him. The career of the former was a progressive rise, that of the latter a progressive fall. The ultimate influence of Cromwell's policy was to develop the great-

ness of England; that of Louis, to cut the sinews of national wealth, and poison those sources of renovation which still remained. The memory of Cromwell is dear to good men in spite of his defects; while that of Louis, in spite of his graces and urbanities, is a watchword for all that is repulsive in despotism. Hence Cromwell is more and more a favorite with enlightened minds, while Louis is more and more regarded as a man who made the welfare of the State subordinate to his own glory. In a word, Cromwell feared only God; while Louis feared only hell. The piety of the one was lofty; that of the other was technical, formal, and pharisaical. The chief defect in the character of Cromwell was his expediency, or what I call *jesuitism*, — following out good ends by questionable means; the chief defect in the character of Louis was an absorbing egotism, which sacrificed everything for private pleasure or interest.

The difficulty in judging Cromwell seems to me to be in the imperfection of our standards of public morality. We are apt to excuse in a ruler what we condemn in a private man. If Oliver Cromwell is to be measured by the standard which accepts expediency as a guide in life, he will be excused for his worst acts. If he is to be measured by an immutable standard, he will be picked to pieces. In regard to his private life, aside from cant and dissimulation, there is not much to

condemn, and there is much to praise. He was not a libertine like Henry IV., nor an egotist like Napoleon. He delighted in the society of the learned and the pious; he was susceptible to grand sentiments; he was just in his dealings and fervent in his devotions. He was liberal, humane, simple, unostentatious, and economical. He was indeed ambitious, but his ambition was noble.

His intellectual defect was his idea of special divine illumination, which made him visionary and rhapsodical and conceited. He was a second-adventist, and believed that Christ would return, at no distant time, to establish the reign of the saints upon the earth. But his morals were as irreproachable as those of Marcus Aurelius. Like Michael Angelo, he despised frivolities, though it is said he relished rough jokes, like Abraham Lincoln. He was conscientious in the discharge of what he regarded as duties, and seemed to feel his responsibility to God as the sovereign of the universe. His family revered him as much as the nation respected him. He was not indeed lovable, like Saint Louis; but he can never lose the admiration of mankind, since the glory of his administration was not sullied by those private vices which destroy esteem and ultimately undermine both power and influence. He was one of those world-heroes of whom nations will be proud as they advance in the toleration of

human infirmities, — as they draw distinction between those who live for themselves and those who live for their country, — and the recognition of those principles on which all progress is based.

Cromwell died prematurely, if not for his fame, at least for his usefulness. His reign as Protector lasted only five years, yet what wonders he did in that brief period! He suppressed the anarchies of the revolution, he revived law, he restored learning, he developed the resources of his country; he made it respected at home and abroad, and shed an imperishable glory on his administration, — but "on the threshold of success he met the inexorable enemy."

It was a stormy night, August 30, 1658, when the wild winds were roaring and all nature was overclouded with darkness and gloom, that the last intelligible words of the dying hero were heard by his attendants: "O Lord! though I am a miserable sinner, I am still in covenant with Thee. Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, an instrument to do Thy people good; and go on, O Lord, to deliver them and make Thy name glorious throughout the world!" These dying words are the key alike to his character and his mission. He believed himself to be an instrument of the Almighty Sovereign in whom he believed, and whom, with all his faults and errors, he sought to serve, and in whom he trusted.

And it is in this light, chiefly, that the career of this remarkable man is to be viewed. An instrument of God he plainly was, to avenge the wrongs of an insulted, an indignant, and an honest nation, and to impress upon the world the necessity of wise and benignant rulers. He arose to vindicate the majesty of public virtue, to rebuke the egotism of selfish kings, to punish the traitors of important trusts. He arose to point out the true sources of national prosperity, to head off the troops of a renovated Romanism, to promote liberty of conscience in all matters of religious belief. He was raised up as a champion of Protestantism when kings were returning to Rome, and as an awful chastiser of those bigoted and quarrelsome Irish who have ever been hostile to law and order, and uncontrollable by any influence but that of fear. But, above all, he was raised up to try the experiment of liberty in the seventeenth century.

That experiment unfortunately failed. All sects and parties sought ascendency rather than the public good; angry and inexperienced, they refused to compromise. Sectarianism was the true hydra that baffled the energy of the courageous combatant. Parliaments were factious, meddlesome, and inexperienced, and sought to block the wheels of government rather than promote wholesome legislation. The people hankered for their old pleasures, and were impatient of restraint; their leaders

were demagogues or fanatics; they could not be coerced by mild measures or appeals to enlightened reason. Hence coercive measures were imperative; and these could be carried only by a large standing army, — ever the terror and menace of liberty; the greatest blot on constitutional governments, — a necessity, but an evil, since the military power should be subordinate to the civil, not the civil to the military. The iron hand by which Cromwell was obliged to rule, if he ruled at all, at last became odious to all classes, since they had many rights which were ignored. When they clamored for the blood of an anointed tyrant, they did not bargain for a renewed despotism more irksome and burdensome than the one they had suppressed. The public rejoicings, the universal enthusiasm, the brilliant spectacles and fêtes, the flattering receptions and speeches which hailed the restoration of Charles II., showed unmistakably that the régime of Cromwell, though needed for a time, was unpopular, and was not in accordance with the national aspirations. If they were to be ruled by a tyrant, they preferred to be ruled according to precedents and traditions and hallowed associations. The English people loved then, as they love now, as they ever have loved, royalty, — the reign of kings according to the principles of legitimacy. They have shown the disposition to fetter these kings, not to dispense with them.

So the experiment of Cromwell and his party failed. How mournful it must have seemed to the original patriots of the revolution, that hard, iron, military rule was all that England had gained by the struggles and the blood of her best people. Wherefore had treasures been lavished in a nine years' contest; wherefore the battles of Marston Moor and Worcester; wherefore the eloquence of Pym and Hampden? All wasted. The house which had been swept and garnished was re-entered by devils worse than before.

Thus did this experiment seem; teaching, at least, this useful and impressive lesson, — that despotism will succeed unwise and violent efforts for reform; that reforms are not to be carried on by bayonets, but by reason; that reformers must be patient, and must be contented with constitutional measures; that any violation of the immutable laws of justice will be visited with unlooked-for retribution.

But sad as this experiment seemed, can it be pronounced to be wholly a failure? No earnest human experiment is ever thrown away. The great ideas of Cromwell, and of those who originally took up arms with him, entered into new combinations. The spirit remained, if the form was changed. After a temporary reaction, the love of liberty returned. The second revolution of 1688 was the logical sequence of the first. It was only another act in the great drama of national

development. The spirit which overthrew Charles I. also overturned the throne of James II.; but the wisdom gained by experience sent him into exile, instead of executing him on the scaffold. Two experiments with those treacherous Stuarts were necessary before the conviction became fastened on the mind of the English people that constitutional liberty could not exist while they remained upon the throne; and the spirit which had burst out into a blazing flame two generations earlier, was now confined within constitutional limits. But it was not suppressed; it produced salutary reforms with every advancing generation. "It produced," says Macaulay, "the famous Declaration of Right, which guaranteed the liberties of the English upon their present basis; which again led to the freedom of the press, the abolition of slavery, Catholic emancipation, and representative reform." Had the experiment not been tried by Cromwell and his party, it might have been tried by worse men, whose gospel of rights would be found in the "social contract" of a Rousseau, rather than in the "catechism" of the Westminster divines. It was fortunate that revolutionary passions should have raged in the bosoms of Christians rather than of infidels, — of men who believed in obedience to a personal God, rather than men who teach the holiness of untutored impulse, the infallibility of majorities, and the majesty of the unaided

intellect of man. And then who can estimate the value of Cromwell's experience on the patriots of our own Revolution? His example may even have taught the great Washington how dangerous and inconsistent it would be to accept an earthly crown, while denouncing the tyranny of kings, and how much more enduring is that fame which is cherished in a nation's heart than that which is blared by the trumpet of idolatrous soldiers indifferent to those rights which form the basis of social civilization.

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LOUIS XIV.

A. D. 1638–1715.

THE FRENCH MONARCHY.

LOUIS XIV.

THE FRENCH MONARCHY.

THE verdict of this age in reference to Louis XIV. is very different from that which his own age pronounced. Two hundred years ago his countrymen called him *Le Grand Monarque*, and his glory filled the world. Since Charlemagne, no monarch had been the object of such unbounded panegyric as he, until Napoleon appeared. He lived in an atmosphere of perpetual incense, and reigned in dazzling magnificence.

Although he is not now regarded in the same light as he was in the seventeenth century, and originated no great movement that civilization values, — in fact was anything but a permanent benefactor to his country or mankind, — yet Louis XIV. is still one of the Beacon Lights of history, for warning if not for guidance. His reign was an epoch; it was not only one of the longest in human annals, but also one of the most brilliant, imposing, and interesting. Whatever opinion may exist as to his inherent in-

tellectual greatness, no candid historian denies the power of his will, the force of his character, and the immense influence he exerted. He was illustrious, if he was not great; he was powerful, if he made fatal mistakes; he was feared and envied by all nations, even when he stood alone; and it took all Europe combined to strip him of the conquests which his generals made, and to preserve the "balance of power" which he had disturbed. With all Europe in arms against him, he, an old and broken-hearted man, contrived to preserve, by his fortitude and will, the territories he had inherited; and he died peacefully upon his bed, at the age of seventy-six, still the most absolute king that ever reigned in France. A man so strong, so fortunate until his latter years; so magnificent in his court, which he made the most brilliant of modern times; so lauded by the great geniuses who surrounded his throne, all of whom looked up to him as a central sun of power and glory,—is not to be flippantly judged, or ruthlessly hurled from that proud pinnacle on which he was seated, amid the acclamations of two generations. His successes dazzled the world; his misfortunes excited its pity, except among those who were sufferers by his needless wars or his cruel persecutions. His virtues and his defects both stand out in bold relief, and will make him a character to meditate upon as long as history shall be written.

The reign of Louis XIV. would be remarkable for the great men who shed lustre on his throne, if he had himself been contemptible. Voltaire doubted if any age ever saw such an illustrious group, and he compares it with the age of Pericles in Greece, with that of Augustus in Rome, and that of the Medici in Italy, — four great epochs in intellectual excellence, which have never been surpassed in brilliancy and variety of talent. No such generals had arisen since the palmy days of Roman grandeur as Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, Vauban, Berwick, and Villars, if we except Gustavus Adolphus, and those generals with whom the marshals of Louis contended, such as William III., Marlborough, and Eugene. No monarch was ever served by abler ministers than Colbert and Louvois; the former developing the industries and resources of a great country, and the latter organizing its forces for all the exigencies of vast military campaigns. What galaxy of poets more brilliant than that which shed glory on the throne of this great king! — men like Corneille, Boileau, Fontanelle, La Fontaine, Racine, and Molière; no one of them a Dante or a Shakspeare, but all together shining as a constellation. What great jurists and lawyers were Le Tellier and D'Aguesseau and Molé! What great prelates and preachers were Bossuet, Fénelon, Bourdaloue, Massillon, Fléchier, Saurin, — unrivalled for eloquence in any age! What original

and profound thinkers were Pascal, Descartes, Helvetius, Malebranche, Nicole, and Quesnel! Until the seventeenth century, what more respectable historians had arisen than Dupin, Tillemont, Mabillon, and Fleury; or critics and scholars than Bayle, Arnauld, De Sacy, and Calmet! La Rochefoucauld uttered maxims which were learned by heart by giddy courtiers. Great painters and sculptors, such as Le Brun, Poussin, Claude Lorrain, and Girardon, ornamented the palaces which Mansard erected; while Le Nôtre laid out the gardens of those palaces which are still a wonder.

It must be borne in mind that Louis XIV. had an intuitive perception of genius and talent, which he was proud to reward and anxious to appropriate. Although his own education had been neglected, he had a severe taste and a disgust of all vulgarity, so that his manners were decorous and dignified in the midst of demoralizing pleasures. Proud, both from adulation and native disposition, he yet was polite and affable. He never passed a woman without lifting his hat, and he uniformly rose when a lady entered into his presence. But, with all his politeness, he never unbent, even in the society of his most intimate friends, so jealous was he of his dignity and power. Unscrupulous in his public transactions, and immoral in his private relations with women, he had a great respect for the

ordinances of religion, and was punctilious in the outward observances of the Catholic Church. The age itself was religious; and so was he, in a technical and pharisaical piety and petty ritualistic duties. He was a bigot and a persecutor, which fact endeared him to the Jesuits, by whom, in matters of conscience, he was ruled, so that he became their tool even while he thought he controlled everything. He was as jealous of his power as he was of his dignity, and he learned to govern himself as well as his subjects. He would himself submit to the most rigid formalities in order to exact a rigorous discipline and secure unconditional obedience from others. No one ever dared openly to thwart his will or oppose his wishes, although he could be led through his passions and his vanity: he was imperious in his commands, and exacting in the services he demanded from all who surrounded his person. He had perfect health, a strong physique, great aptitude for business, and great regularity in his habits. It was difficult to deceive him, for he understood human nature, and thus was able to select men of merit and talent for all high offices in State and Church.

In one sense Louis XIV. seems to have been even patriotic, since he identified his own glory with that of the nation, having learned something from Richelieu, whose policy he followed. Hence he was supported by the people, if he was not loved, because he was

ambitious of making France the most powerful nation in Christendom. The love of glory ever has been one of the characteristics of the French nation, and this passion the king impersonated, which made him dear to the nation, as Napoleon was before he became intoxicated by power; and hence Louis had the power of rallying his subjects in great misfortunes. They forgave extravagance in palace-building, from admiration of magnificence. They were proud of a despot who called out the praises of the world. They saw in his parks, his gardens, his marble halls, his tapestries, his pictures, and his statues a glory which belonged to France as well as to him. They marched joyfully in his armies, whatever their sacrifices, for he was only leading them to glory, — an empty illusion, yet one of those words which has ruled the world, since it is an expression of that vanity which has its roots in the deepest recesses of the soul. Glory is the highest aspiration of egotism, and Louis was an incarnation of egotism, like Napoleon after him. They both represented the master passions of the people to whom they appealed. "Never," says St. Simon, "has any one governed with a better grace, or, by the manner of bestowing, more enhanced the value of his favors. Never has any one sold at so high a price his words, nay his very smiles and glances." And then, "so imposing and majestic was his air that those who addressed him must first accustom themselves to

his appearance, not to be overawed. No one ever knew better how to maintain a certain manner which made him appear great." Yet it is said that his stature was small. No one knew better than he how to impress upon his courtiers the idea that kings are of a different blood from other men. He even knew how to invest vice and immorality with an air of elegance, and was capable of generous sentiments and actions. He on one occasion sold a gold service of plate for four hundred thousand francs, to purchase bread for starving troops. If haughty, exacting, punctilious, he was not cold. Even his rigid etiquette and dignified reserve were the dictates of statecraft, as well as of natural inclination. He seemed to feel that he was playing a great part, with the eyes of the world upon him; so that he was an actor as Napoleon was, but a more consistent one, because in his egotism he never forgot himself, not even among his mistresses. As *grand monarque*, the arbiter of all fortunes, the central sun of all glory, was he always figuring before the eyes of men. He never relaxed his habits of ceremony and ostentation, nor his vigilance as an administrator, nor his iron will, nor his thirst for power; so that he ruled as he wished until he died, in spite of the reverses of his sad old age, and without losing the respect of his subjects, oppressed as they were with taxes and humiliated by national disasters.

Such were some of the traits which made Louis XIV. a great sovereign, if not a great man. He was not only supported by the people who were dazzled by his magnificence, and by the great men who adorned his court, but he was aided by fortunate circumstances and great national ideas. He was heir of the powers of Richelieu and the treasures of Mazarin. Those two cardinals, who claimed equal rank with independent princes, higher than that of the old nobility, pursued essentially the same policy, although this policy was the fruit of Richelieu's genius; and this policy was the concentration of all authority in the hands of the king. Louis XIII. was the feeblest of the Bourbons, but he made his throne the first in Europe. Richelieu was a great benefactor to the cause of law, order, and industry, despotic as was his policy and hateful his character. When he died, worn out by his herculean labors, the nobles tried to regain the privileges and powers they had lost, and a miserable warfare called the "Fronde" was the result, carried on without genius or system. But the Fronde produced some heroes who were destined to be famous in the great wars of Louis XIV. Mazarin, with less ability than Richelieu, and more selfish, conquered in the end, by following out the policy of his predecessor. He developed the resources of the kingdom, besides accumulating an enormous fortune for himself, — about two hundred millions

of francs, — which, when he died, he bequeathed, not to the Church or his relatives, but to the young King, who thus became personally rich as well as strong. To have entered upon the magnificent inheritance which these two able cardinals bequeathed to the monarchy was most fortunate to Louis, — unrestricted power and enormous wealth.

But Louis was still more fortunate in reaping the benefits of the principle of royalty. We have in the United States but a feeble conception of the power of this principle in Europe in the seventeenth century; it was nursed by all the chivalric sentiments of the Middle Ages. The person of a king was sacred; he was regarded as divinely commissioned. The sacred oil poured on his head by the highest dignitary of the Church, at his coronation, imparted to him a sacred charm. All the influences of the Church, as well as those of Feudalism, set the king apart from all other men, as a consecrated monarch to rule the people. This loyalty to the throne had the sanction of the Jewish nation, and of all Oriental nations from the remotest ages. Hence the world has known no other form of government than that of kings and emperors, except in a few countries and for a brief period. Whatever the king decreed, had the force of irresistible law; no one dared to disobey a royal mandate but a rebel in actual hostilities. Resistance to royal authority was ruin. This royal power

was based on and enforced by the ideas of ages. Who can resist universally accepted ideas?

Moreover, in France especially, there was a chivalric charm about the person of a king; he was not only sacred, of purer blood than other people, but the greatest nobles were proud to attend and wait upon his person. Devotion to the person of the prince became the highest duty. It was not political slavery, but a religious and sentimental allegiance. So sacred was this allegiance, that only the most detested tyrants were in personal danger of assassination, or those who were objects of religious fanaticism. A king could dismiss his most powerful minister, or his most triumphant general at the head of an army, by a stroke of the pen, or by a word, without expostulation or resistance. To disobey the king was tantamount to defiance of Almighty power. A great general rules by machinery rather than devotion to his person. But devotion to the king needed no support from armies or guards. A king in the seventeenth century was supposed to be the vicegerent of the Deity.

Another still more powerful influence gave stability to the throne of Louis: this was the Catholic Church. Louis was a devout Catholic in spite of his sins, and was true to the interests of the Pope. He was governed, so far as he was governed at all, by Jesuit confessors. He associated on the most intimate terms

with the great prelates and churchmen of the day, like Bossuet, Fénelon, La Chaise, and Le Tellier. He was regular at church and admired good sermons; he was punctilious in all the outward observances of his religion. He detested all rebellion from the spiritual authority of the popes; he hated both heresy and schism. In his devotion to the Catholic Church he was as narrow and intolerant as a village priest. His sincerity in defence of the Church was never questioned, and hence all the influences of the Church were exerted to uphold his domination. He may have quarrelled with popes on political grounds, and humiliated them as temporal powers, but he stood by them in the exercise of their spiritual functions. In Louis' reign the State and Church were firmly knit together. It was deemed necessary to be a good Catholic in order to be even a citizen,—so that religion became fashionable, provided it was after the pattern of that of the King and court. Even worldly courtiers entered with interest into the most subtile of theological controversies. But the King always took the side devoted to the Pope, and he hated Jansenism almost as much as he hated Protestantism. Hence the Catholic Church ever rallied to his support.

So, with all these powerful supports Louis began his long reign of seventy-six years,—which technically began when he was four years old, on the death of

his father Louis XIII., in 1643, when the kingdom was governed by his mother, Anne of Austria, as regent, and by Cardinal Mazarin as prime minister. During the minority of the King the humiliation of the nobles continued. Protestantism was only tolerated, and the country distracted rather than impoverished by the civil war of the Fronde, with its intrigues and ever-shifting parties, — a giddy maze, which nobody now cares to unravel; a sort of dance of death, in which figured cardinals, princes, nobles, bishops, judges, and generals, — when "Bacchus, Momus, and Moloch" alternately usurped dominion. Those eighteen years of strife, folly, absurdity, and changing fortunes, when Mazarin was twice compelled to quit the kingdom he governed; when the queen-regent was forced also twice to fly from her capital; when Cardinal De Retz disgraced his exalted post as Archbishop of Paris by the vilest intrigues; when Condé and Conti obscured the lustre of their military laurels; when alternately the parliaments made war on the crown, and the seditious nobles ignobly yielded their functions merely to register royal decrees, — these contests, rivalries, cabals, and follies, ending however in the more solid foundations of absolute royal authority, are not to be here discussed, especially as nobody can thread that political labyrinth; and we begin, therefore, not with the technical reign of the great King, but with his actual

government, which took place on the death of Mazarin, when he was twenty-two.

It is said that when that able ruler passed away so reluctantly from his pictures and his government, the ministers asked of the young King, — thus far only known for his pleasures, — to whom they should now bring their portfolios, "To me," he replied; and from that moment he became the State, and his will the law of the land.

I have already alluded to the talents and capacities of Louis for governing, and the great aid he derived from the labors of Richelieu and the moral sentiments of his age respecting royalty and religion; so I will not dwell on personal defects or virtues, but proceed to show the way in which he executed the task devolved upon him, — in other words, present a brief history of his government, for which he was so well fitted by native talents, fortunate circumstances, and established ideas. I will only say, that never did a monarch enter upon his career with such ample and magnificent opportunities for being a benefactor of his people and of civilization. In his hands were placed all the powers of good and evil; and so far as government can make a nation great, Louis had the means and opportunities beyond those of any monarch in modern times. He had armies and generals and accumulated treasures; and all implicitly served him. His

ministers and his generals were equally able and supple, and he was at peace with all the world. Parliaments, nobles, and Huguenots were alike submissive and reverential. He had inherited the experience of Sully, of Richelieu, and of Mazarin. His kingdom was protected by great natural boundaries, — the North Sea, the ocean, the Mediterranean, the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the mountains which overlook the Rhine. By nothing was he fettered but by the decrees of everlasting righteousness. To his praise be it said, he inaugurated his government by selecting Colbert as one of his prime ministers, — the ablest man of his kingdom. It was this honest and astute servant of royalty who ferreted out the peculations of Fouquet, whom Louis did not hesitate to disgrace and punish. The great powers of Fouquet were gradually bestowed on the merchant's son of Rheims.

Colbert was a plebeian and a Protestant, — cold, severe, reserved, awkward, abrupt, and ostentatiously humble, but of inflexible integrity and unrivalled sagacity and forethought; more able as a financier and political economist than any man of his century. It was something for a young, proud, and pleasure-seeking monarch to see and reward the talents of such a man; and Colbert had the tact and wisdom to make his young master believe that all the measures which he pursued originated in the royal brain. His great merit

as a minister consisted in developing the industrial resources of France and providing the King with money.

Colbert was the father of French commerce, and the creator of the French navy. He saw that Flanders was enriched by industry, and England and Holland made powerful by a navy, while Spain and Portugal languished and declined with all their mines of gold and silver. So he built ships of war, and made harbors for them, gave charters to East and West India Companies, planted colonies in India and America, decreed tariffs to protect infant manufactures, gave bounties to all kinds of artisans, encouraged manufacturing industry, and declared war on the whole brood of aristocratic peculators that absorbed the revenues of the kingdom. He established a better system of accounts, compelled all officers to reside at their posts, and reduced the percentage of the collection of the public money. In thirteen years he increased the navy from thirty ships to two hundred and seventy-three, one hundred of which were ships of the line. He prepared a new code of maritime law for the government of the navy, which called out universal admiration. He dug the canal of Languedoc, which united the Mediterranean with the Atlantic Ocean. He instituted the Academies of Sciences, of Inscriptions, of Belles Lettres, of Painting, of Sculpture, of Architecture; and founded

the School of Oriental languages, the Observatory, and the School of Law. He gave pensions to Corneille, Racine, Molière, and other men of genius. He rewarded artists and invited scholars to France; he repaired roads, built bridges, and directed the attention of the middle classes to the accumulation of capital. "He recognized the connection of works of industry with the development of genius. He saw the influence of science in the production of riches; of taste on industry; and the fine arts on manual labor." For all these enlightened measures the King had the credit and the glory; and it certainly redounds to his sagacity that he accepted such wise suggestions, although he mistook them for his own. So to the eyes of Europe Louis at once loomed up as an enlightened monarch; and it would be difficult to rob him of this glory. He indorsed the economical reforms of his great minister, and rewarded merit in all departments, which he was not slow to see. The world extolled this enlightened and fortunate young prince, and saw in him a second Solomon, both for wisdom and magnificence.

Another great genius ably assisted Louis as soon as he turned his attention to war, — the usual employment of ambitious kings, — and this was Le Tellier, Marquis of Louvois, the great war minister, who laid out the campaigns and directed the movements of such generals as Condé, Turenne, and Luxembourg. And here again

it redounds to the sagacity of Louis that he should select a man for so great a post whom he never personally loved, and who in his gusts of passion would almost insult his master. Louvois is acknowledged to have been the ablest war minister that France ever had.

Louis reigned peaceably and prosperously for six years before the ambition of being a conqueror and a hero seized him. At twenty-eight he burned to play the part of Alexander. Thenceforth the history of his reign chiefly pertains to his gigantic wars, — some defensive, but mostly offensive, aggressive, and unprovoked.

In regard to these various wars, which plunged Europe in mourning and rage for nearly fifty years, Louis is generally censured by historians. They were wars of ambition, like those of Alexander and Frederic II., until Europe combined against him and compelled him to act on the defensive. The limits of this lecture necessarily prevent me from describing these wars; I can only allude to the most important of them, and then only to show results.

His first great war was simply outrageous, and was an insult to all Europe, and a violation of all international law. In 1667, with an immense army, he undertook the conquest of Flanders, with no better excuse than Frederic II. had for the invasion of Silesia, —

because he wanted an increase of territory. Flanders had done nothing to warrant this outrage, was unprepared for war, and was a weak state, but rich and populous, with fine harbors, and flourishing manufactures. With nearly fifty thousand men, under Condé, Turenne, and Luxembourg, and other generals of note, aided by Louvois, who provided military stores of every kind, and all under the eye of the King himself, full of ideas of glory, the issue of the conflict was not doubtful. In fact, there was no serious defence. It was hopeless from the first. Louis had only to take possession of cities and fortresses which were at his mercy. The frontier towns were mostly without fortifications, so that it took only about two or three days to conquer any city. The campaign was more a court progress than a series of battles. It was a sort of holiday sport for courtiers, like a royal hunt. The conquest of all Flanders might have been the work of a single campaign, for no city offered a stubborn resistance; but the war was prolonged for another year, that Louis might more easily take possession of Franche-Comté, — a poor province, but fertile in soil, well peopled, one hundred and twenty miles in length and sixty in breadth. In less than three weeks this province was added to France. "Louis," said the Spanish council in derision, "might have sent his *valet de chambre* to have taken possession of the country in

his name, and saved himself the trouble of going in person."

This successful raid seems to have contented the King for the time, since Holland made signs of resistance, and a league was forming against him, embracing England, Holland, and Sweden.

The courtiers and flatterers of Louis XIV. called this unheroic seizure "glory." And it doubtless added to the dominion of France, inflamed the people with military ambition, and caused the pride of birth for the first time to yield to military talent and military rank. A marshal became a greater personage than a duke, although a marshal was generally taken from the higher nobility.

Louis paid no apparent penalty for this crime, any more than prosperous wickedness at first usually receives. "His eyes stood out with fatness." To idolatrous courtiers "he had more than heart could wish." But the penalty was to come: law cannot be violated with impunity.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1668 followed, which made Louis the most prominent figure in Europe. He was then twenty-nine years of age, in the pride of strength, devoted equally to pleasure and ambition. It was then that he was the lover of the Duchesse de La Vallière, who was soon to be supplanted by the imperious Montespan. Louis remained at peace for

four years, but all the while he was preparing for another war, aimed against Holland, which had offended him because resolved to resist him.

Vaster preparations were made for this war than that against Flanders, five years before. The storm broke out in 1672, when this little state saw itself invaded by one hundred and thirty thousand men, led by the King in person, accompanied by his principal marshals, his war-minister Louvois, and Vauban, to whom was intrusted the direction of siege operations, — an engineer who changed the system of fortifications. This was the most magnificent army that Europe had ever seen since the Crusades, and much was expected of it. Against Condé, Turenne, Luxembourg, and Vauban, all under the eye of the King, with a powerful train of artillery, and immense sums of money to bribe the commanders of garrisons, Holland had only to oppose twenty-five thousand soldiers, under a sickly young man of twenty-two, William, Prince of Orange.

Of course Holland was unable to resist such an overwhelming tide of enemies, such vast and disproportionate forces. City after city and fortress after fortress was compelled to surrender to the generals of the French King. "They were taken almost as soon as they were invested." All the strongholds on the Rhine and Issel fell. The Prince of Orange could not even take the field. Louis crossed the Rhine without difficulty, when

the waters were low, with only four or five hundred horsemen to dispute his passage. This famous passage was the subject of ridiculous panegyrics by both painters and poets. It was generally regarded as a prodigious feat, especially by the people of Paris, as if it were another passage of the Granicus.

Then rapidly fell Arnheim, Nimeguen, Utrecht, and other cities. The wealthy families of Amsterdam prepared to embark in their ships for the East Indies. Nothing remained to complete the conquest of Holland but the surrender of Amsterdam, which still held out. Holland was in despair, and sent ambassadors to the camp of Louis, headed by Grotius, to implore his mercy. He received them, after protracted delays, with blended insolence and arrogance, and demanded, as the conditions of his mercy, that the States should give up all their fortified cities, pay twenty millions of francs, and establish the Catholic religion,— conditions which would have reduced the Hollanders to absolute slavery, morally and politically. From an inspiration of blended patriotism and despair, the Dutch opened their dykes, overflowed the whole country in possession of the enemy, and thus made Amsterdam impregnable,— especially as they were still masters of the sea, and had just dispersed, in a brilliant naval battle under De Ruyter, the combined fleets of France and England.

It was this memorable resistance to vastly superior forces, and readiness to make any sacrifices, which gave immortal fame to William of Orange, and imperishable glory also to the little state over which he ruled. What a spectacle!—a feeble mercantile state, without powerful allies, bracing itself up to a life-and-death struggle with the mightiest potentate of Europe. I know no parallel to it in the history of modern times. Our fathers in the Revolutionary war could retreat to forests and mountains; but Holland had neither mountains nor forests. There was no escape from political ruin but by the inundation of fertile fields, the destruction to an unprecedented degree of private property, and the decimation of the male part of the population. Nor did the noble defenders dream of victory; they only hoped to make a temporary stand. William knew he would be beaten in every battle; his courage was moral rather than physical. He lost no ground by defeat, while Louis lost ground by victory, since it required a large part of his army to guard the prisoners and garrison the fortresses he had taken.

Some military writers say that Louis should have persevered until he had taken Amsterdam. As well might Napoleon have remained in Russia after the conflagration of Moscow. In May, Louis entered Holland; in July, all Europe was in confederacy against him, through the negotiations of the Prince of Orange.

Louis hastened to quit the army when no more conquests could be made in a country overflowed with water, leaving Turenne and Luxembourg to finish the war in Franche-Comté. The able generals of the French king were obliged to evacuate Holland. That little state, by an act of supreme self-sacrifice, saved itself when all seemed lost. I do not read of any military mistakes on the part of the generals of Louis. They were baffled by an unforeseen inundation; and when they were compelled to evacuate the flooded country, the Dutch quietly closed their dykes and pumped the water out again into their canals by their windmills, and again restored fertility to their fields; and by the time Louis was prepared for fresh invasions, a combination existed against him so formidable that he found it politic to make peace. The campaigns of Turenne on the Rhine were indeed successful; but he was killed in an insignificant battle, from a chance cannon-ball, while the Prince of Condé retired forever from military service after the bloody battle of Senif. On the whole, the French were victorious in the terrible battles which followed the evacuation of Holland, and Louis dictated peace to Europe apparently in the midst of victories at Nimeguen, in 1678, after six years of brilliant fighting on both sides.

At the peace of Nimeguen Louis was in the zenith of his glory, as Napoleon was after the peace of Tilsit.

He was justly regarded as the mightiest monarch of his age, the greatest king that France had ever seen. All Europe stood in awe of him; and with awe was blended admiration, for his resources were unimpaired, his generals had greatly distinguished themselves, and he had added important provinces to his kingdom, which was also enriched by the internal reforms of Colbert, and made additionally powerful by commerce and a great navy, which had gained brilliant victories over the Dutch and Spanish fleets. Duquesne showed himself to be almost as great a genius in naval warfare as De Ruyter, who was killed off Aosta in 1676. In those happy and prosperous days the Hotel de Ville conferred upon Louis the title of "Great," which posterity never acknowledged. "Titles," says Voltaire, "are never regarded by posterity. The simple name of a man who has performed noble actions impresses on us more respect than all the epithets that can be invented."

After the peace of Nimeguen, in 1678, the King reigned in greater splendor than before. There were no limits to his arrogance and his extravagance. He was a modern Nebuchadnezzar. He claimed to be the state. *L'état, c'est moi!* was his proud exclamation. He would bear no contradiction and no opposition. The absorbing sentiment of his soul seems to have been that France belonged to him, that it had been given to

him as an inheritance, to manage as he pleased for his private gratification. "Self-aggrandizement," he wrote, "is the noblest occupation of kings." Most writers affirm that personal aggrandizement became the law of his life, and that he now began to lose sight of the higher interests and happiness of his people, and to reign not for them but for himself. He became a man of resentments, of caprices, of undisguised selfishness; he became pompous and haughty and self-willed. We palliate his self-exaggeration and pride, on account of the disgraceful flatteries he received on every hand. Never was a man more extravagantly lauded, even by the learned. But had he been half as great as his courtiers made him think, he would not have been so intoxicated; Cæsar or Charlemagne would not thus have lost his intellectual balance. The strongest argument to prove that he was not inherently great, but made apparently so by fortunate circumstances, is his self-deception.

In his arrogance and presumption, like Napoleon after the peace of Tilsit, he now sets aside the rights of other nations, heaps galling insults on independent potentates, and assumes the most arrogant tone in all his relations with his neighbors or subjects. He makes conquests in the midst of peace. He cites the princes of Europe before his councils. He deprives the Elector Palatine and the Elector of Treves of some of their

most valuable seigniories. He begins to persecute the Protestants. He seizes Luxembourg and the principality which belonged to it. He humbles the republic of Genoa, and compels the Doge to come to Versailles to implore his clemency. He treats with haughty insolence the Pope himself, and sends an ambassador to his court on purpose to insult him. He even insists on giving an Elector to Cologne.

And the same inflated pride and vanity which led Louis to trample on the rights of other nations, led him into unbounded extravagance in palace-building. Versailles arose, — at a cost, some affirm, of a thousand millions of livres, — unrivalled for magnificence since the fall of the Cæsars. In this vast palace did he live, more after the fashion of an Oriental than an Occidental monarch, having enriched and furnished it with the wonders of the world, surrounded with princes, marshals, nobles, judges, bishops, ambassadors, poets, artists, philosophers, and scholars, all of whom rendered to him perpetual incense. Never was such a grand court seen before on this earth: it was one of the great features of the seventeenth century. There was nothing censurable in collecting all the most distinguished and illustrious people of France around him: they must have formed a superb society, from which the proud monarch could learn much to his enlightenment. But he made them all obsequious courtiers.

From the painting by A. P. E. Morton

LOUIS XIV. AND MLLE. DE LA VALLIÈRE

exacted from all an idolatrous homage, and subjected them to wearisome ceremonials. He took away their intellectual independence; he banished Racine because the poet presumed to write a political tract. He made it difficult to get access to his person; he degraded the highest nobles by menial offices, and insulted the nation by the exaltation of abandoned women, who squandered the revenues of the state in their pleasures and follies, so that this grand court, alike gay and servile, intellectual and demoralized, became the scene of perpetual revels, scandals, and intrigues.

It was at this period that Louis abandoned himself to those adulterous pleasures which have ever disgraced the Bourbons. Yet scarcely a single woman by whom he was for a while enslaved retained her influence, but a succession of mistresses arose, blazed, triumphed, and fell. Mancini, the niece of Mazarin, was forsaken without the decency of the slightest word of consolation. La Vallière, the only woman who probably ever loved him with sincerity and devotion, had but a brief reign, and was doomed to lead a dreary life of thirty-six years in penitence and neglect in a Carmelite convent. Madame de Montespan retained her ascendency longer for she had talents as well as physical beauty; she was the most prodigal and imperious of all the women that ever triumphed over the weakness of man. She reigned when Louis was in all the pride of man-

hood and at the summit of his greatness and fame, — accompanying him in his military expeditions, presiding at his fêtes, receiving the incense of nobles, the channel of court favor, the dispenser of honors but not of offices; for amid all the slaveries to which women subjected the proudest man on earth by the force of physical charms, he never gave to them his sceptre. It was not till Madame de Maintenon supplanted this beautiful and brilliant woman in the affections of the King, and until he was a victim of superstitious fears, and had met with great reverses, that state secrets were intrusted to a female friend, — for Madame de Maintenon was never a mistress in the sense that Montespan was.

During this brilliant period of ten years from the peace of Nimeguen, in 1678, to the great uprising of the nations to humble him, in 1688, Versailles and other palaces were completed, works of art adorned the capital, and immortal works of genius made his reign illustrious.

While Colbert lived, I do not read of any extraordinary blunder on the part of the Government. Perhaps palace-building may be considered a mistake, since it diverted the revenues of the kingdom into monuments of royal vanity. But the sums lavished on architects, gardeners, painters, sculptors, and those who worked under them, employed thousands of useful arti-

sans, created taste, and helped to civilize the people. The people profited by the extravagance of the King and his courtiers; the money was spent in France, which was certainly better than if it had been expended in foreign wars; it made Paris and Versailles the most attractive cities of the world; it stimulated all the arts, and did not demoralize the nation. Would this country be poorer, and the government less stable, if five hundred millions were expended at Washington to make it the most beautiful city of the land, and create an honest pride even among the representatives of the West, perhaps diverting them from building another capital on the banks of the Mississippi? Would this country be richer if great capitalists locked up their money in State securities, instead of spending their superfluous wealth in reclaiming sterile tracts and converting them into gardens and parks? The very magnificence of Louis impressed such a people as the French with the idea of his power, and tended to make the government secure, until subsequent wars imposed such excessive taxation as to impoverish the people and drain the sources of national wealth. We do not read that Colbert made serious remonstrances to the palace-building of the King, although afterwards Louis regarded it as one of the errors of his reign.

But when Colbert died, in 1685, another spirit seemed to animate the councils of the King, and great mistakes

were made,—which is the more noteworthy, since the moral character of the King seemed to improve. It was at this time that he fell under the influence of Madame de Maintenon and the Jesuits. They made his court more decorous. Montespan was sent away. Bossuet and La Chaise gained great ascendency over the royal conscience. Louis began to realize his responsibilities; the love of glory waned; the welfare of the people was now considered. Whether he was *ennuied* with pleasure, or saw things in a different light, or felt the influence of the narrow-minded but accomplished and virtuous woman whom he made his wife, or was disturbed by the storm which was gathering in the political horizon, he became more thoughtful and grave, though not less tyrannical.

Yet it was then that he made the most fatal mistake of his life, the evil consequences of which pursued him to his death. He revoked the Edict of Nantes, which Henry IV. had granted, and which had secured religious toleration. This he did from a perverted conscience, wishing to secure the unanimity and triumph of the Catholic faith; to this he was incited by the best woman with whom he was ever brought in intimate relations; in this he was encouraged by all the religious bigots of his kingdom. He committed a monstrous crime that good might come,—not foreseeing the ultimate consequences, and showing anything but an

enlarged statesmanship. This stupid folly alienated his best subjects, and sowed the seeds of revolution in the next reign, and tended to undermine the throne. Richelieu never would have consented to such an insane measure; for this cruel act not only destroyed veneration at home, but created detestation among all enlightened foreigners.

It is a hackneyed saying, that "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church." But it would seem that the persecution of the Protestants was an exception to this truth, — and a persecution all the more needless and revolting since the Protestants were not in rebellion against the government, as in the time of Charles IX. This diabolical persecution, justified however by some of the greatest men in France, had its intended results. The bigots who incited that crime had studied well the principles of successful warfare. As early as 1666 the King was urged to suppress the Protestant religion, and long before the Edict of Nantes was revoked the Protestants had been subjected to humiliation and annoyance. If they held places at court, they were required to sell them; if they were advocates, they were forbidden to plead; if they were physicians, they were prevented from visiting patients. They were gradually excluded from appointments in the army and navy; little remained to them except commerce and manufactures. Protestants could not hold Catholics

as servants; soldiers were unjustly quartered upon them; their taxes were multiplied, their petitions were unread. But in 1685 dragonnades subjected them to still greater cruelties; who tore up their linen for camp beds, and emptied their mattresses for litters. The poor, unoffending Protestants filled the prisons, and dyed the scaffolds with their blood. They were prohibited under the severest penalties from the exercise of their religion; their ministers were exiled, their children were baptized in the Catholic faith, their property was confiscated, and all attempts to flee the country were punished by the galleys. Two millions of people were disfranchised; two hundred thousand perished by the executioners, or in prisons, or in the galleys. All who could fly escaped to other countries; and those who escaped were among the most useful citizens, carrying their arts with them to enrich countries at war with France. Some two hundred thousand contrived to fly, — thus weakening the kingdom, and filling Europe with their execrations. Never did a crime have so little justification, and never was a crime followed with severer retribution. Yet Le Tellier, the chancellor, at the age of eighty, thanked God that he was permitted the exalted privilege of affixing the seal of his office to the act before he died. Madame de Maintenon declared that it would cover Louis with glory. Madame de Sévigné said that no royal ordinance had ever been more mag-

nificent. Hardly a protest came from any person of influence in the land, not even from Fénelon. The great Bossuet, at the funeral of Le Tellier, thus broke out: "Let us publish this miracle of our day, and pour out our hearts in praise of the piety of Louis, — this new Constantine, this new Theodosius, this new Charlemagne, through whose hands heresy is no more." The Pope, though at this time hostile to Louis, celebrated a Te Deum.

Among those who fled the kingdom to other lands were nine thousand sailors and twelve thousand soldiers, headed by Marshal Schomberg and Admiral Duquesne, — the best general and the best naval officer that France then had. Other distinguished people transferred their services to foreign courts. The learned Claude, who fled to Holland, gave to the world an eloquent picture of the persecution. Jurieu, by his burning pamphlets, excited the insurrection of Cévennes. Basnage and Rapin, the historians, Saurin the great preacher, Papin the eminent scientist, and other eminent men, all exiles, weakened the supports of Louis. France was impoverished in every way by this "great miracle" of the reign; "so that," says Martin, "the new temple that Louis had pretended to erect to unity fell to ruin as it rose from the ground, and left only an open chasm in place of its foundations. . . . The nothingness of absolute government by one

alone was revealed under the very reign of the great King."

The rebound of the revocation overthrew all the barriers within which Louis had intrenched himself. All the smothered fires of hatred and of vengeance were kindled anew in Holland and in every Protestant country. William of Orange headed the confederation of hostile states that dreaded the ascendency and detested the policy of Louis XIV. All Europe was resolved on the humiliation of a man it both feared and hated. The great war which began in 1688, when William of Orange became King of England on the flight of James II., was not sought by Louis. This war cannot be laid to his military ambition; he provoked it indeed, indirectly, by his arrogance and religious persecutions, but on his part it was as truly defensive as were the wars of Napoleon after the invasion of Russia. Whatever is truly heroic in the character of Louis was seen after he was forty-eight. Whatever claims to greatness he may have had are only to be sustained by the memorable resistance he made to united Europe in arms against him, when his great ministers and his best generals had died. Turenne died in 1675, Colbert in 1683, Condé in 1686, Le Tellier in 1687, and Louvois in 1691. Then it was that his great reverses began, and his glory paled before the sun of the King of England. These reverses may

have been the result of incapacity, and they may have been the result of the combined forces which outnumbered or overmatched his own; certain it is that in the terrible contest to which he was now doomed, he showed great force of character and great fortitude, which command our respect.

I cannot enter on that long war which began with the League of Augsburg in 1686, and continued to the peace of Ryswick in 1697, — nine years of desperate fighting, when successes and defeats were nearly balanced, and when the resources of all the contending parties were nearly exhausted. France, at the close of the war, was despoiled of all her conquests and all the additions to her territory made since the Peace of Nimeguen, except Strasburg and Alsace. For the first time since the accession of Richelieu to power, France lost ground.

The interval between this war and that of the Spanish succession — an interval of three years — was only marked by the ascendency of Madame de Maintenon, and a renewed persecution, directed not against Protestants, but against those Catholics who cultivated the highest and freest religious life, and in which Bossuet appears to a great disadvantage by the side of his rival, the equally illustrious Fénelon. It was also marked by the gradual disappearance of the great lights in literature. La Fontaine died in 1695, Racine in 1699.

Boileau was as good as dead; Mesdames de la Sablière and de la Fayette, Pellisson and Bussy-Rabutin, La Bruyère and Madame Sévigné, all died about this time. The only great men at the close of the century in France who made their genius felt were Bossuet, who encouraged the narrow intolerance which aimed to suppress the Jansenists and Quietists, and Fénelon, who protected them although he did not join them, — the "Eagle of Meaux" and the "Swan of Cambray," as they were called, offering in the realm of art "the eternal duality of strength and grace," like Michael Angelo and Raphael; the one inspiring the fear and the other the love of God, yet both seeing in the Christian religion the highest hopes of the world. The internal history of this period centres around those pious mystics of whom Madame Guyon was the representative, and those inquiring intellectual Jansenists who had defied the Jesuits, but were finally crushed by an intolerant government. The lamentable dispute between Bossuet and Fénelon also then occurred, which led to the disgrace of the latter, — as banishment to his diocese was regarded. But in his exile his moral influence was increased rather than diminished; while the publication of his "Télémaque," made without his consent from a copy that had been abstracted from him, won him France and Europe, though it rendered Louis XIV. forever irreconcilable. Bossuet did not

long survive the banishment of his rival, and died in 1704, a month before Bourdaloue, and two years before Bayle. France intellectually, under the despotic intolerance of the King, was going through an eclipse or hastening to a dissolution, while the material state of the country showed signs of approaching bankruptcy. The people were exhausted by war and taxes, and all the internal improvements which Colbert had stimulated were neglected. "The fisheries of Normandy were ruined, and the pasture lands of Alsace were taken from the peasantry. Picardy lost a twelfth part of its population; many large cities were almost abandoned. In Normandy, out of seven hundred thousand people, there were but fifty thousand who did not sleep on straw. The linen manufactures of Brittany were destroyed by the heavy duties; Touraine lost one-fourth of her population; the silk trade of Tours was ruined; the population of Troyes fell from sixty thousand to twenty thousand; Lyons lost twenty thousand souls since the beginning of the war."

In spite of these calamities the blinded King prepared for another exhausting war, in order to put his grandson on the throne of Spain. This last and most ruinous of all his wars might have been averted if he only could have cast away his ambition and his pride. Humbled and crippled, he yet could not part with the prize which fell to his family by the death of Carlos II. of Spain.

But Europe was determined that the Bourbons should not be further aggrandized.

Thus in 1701 war broke out with even intensified animosities, and lasted twelve years; directed on the one part by Marlborough, Eugene, and Heinsius, and on the other part by Villars, Vendôme, and Catinat, during which the finances of France were ruined and the people reduced to frightful misery. It was then that Louis melted up the medallions of his former victories, to provide food for his starving soldiers. He offered immense concessions, which the allies against him rejected. He was obliged to continue the contest with exhausted resources and a saddened soul. He offered Marlborough four millions to use his influence to procure a peace; but this general, venal as he was, preferred ambition to money. The despair which once overwhelmed Holland now overtook France. The French marshals encountered a greater general than William III., whose greatness was in the heroism of his soul and his diplomatic talents, rather than in his genius on the battle-field. But Marlborough, who led the allies, never lost a battle, nor besieged a fortress he did not take. His master-stroke was to transfer his operations from Flanders to the Danube. At Blenheim was fought one of the decisive battles of the world, in which the Teutonic nations were marshalled against the French. The battle of Ramillies completed the

deliverance of Flanders; and Louis, completely humiliated, agreed to give up ten Flemish provinces to the Dutch, and to surrender to the Emperor of Germany all that France had gained since the peace of Westphalia in 1648. He also agreed to acknowledge Anne as Queen of Great Britain, and to banish the Pretender from his dominions; England was to retain Gibraltar, and Spain to cede to the Emperor of Germany her possessions in Italy and the Netherlands. But France, with all her disasters, was not ruined; the treaty of Utrecht, 1713, left Louis nearly all his inherited possessions, except in America.

Louis was now seventy-four, — an old man whose delusions were dispelled, and to whom successive misfortunes had brought grief and shame. He was deprived by death of his son and grandson, who gave promise of rare virtues and abilities; only a feeble infant — his great-grandson — was the heir of the monarchy. All his vast enterprises had failed. He suffered, to all appearance, a righteous retribution for his early passion for military glory. "He had invaded the rights of Holland; and Holland gave him no rest until, with the aid of the surrounding monarchies, France was driven to the verge of ruin. He had destroyed the cities of the Palatinate; and the Rhine provinces became a wall of fire against his armies. He had conspired against liberty in England; and it was

from England that he experienced the most fatal opposition." His wars, from which he had expected glory, ended at last in the curtailment of his original possessions. His palaces, which had excited the admiration of Europe, became the monuments of extravagance and folly. His persecutions, by which he hoped to secure religious unity, sowed the seeds of discontent, anarchy, and revolution. He left his kingdom politically weaker than it was when he took it; he entailed nothing but disasters to his heirs. His very grants and pensions were subversive of intellectual dignity and independence. At the close of the seventeenth century the great lights had disappeared; he survived his fame, his generals, his family, and his friends; the infirmities of age oppressed his body, and the agonies of religious fears disturbed his soul. We see no greatness but in his magnificence; we strip him of all claims to genius, and even to enlightened statesmanship, and feel that his undoubted skill in holding the reins of government must be ascribed to the weakness and degradation of his subjects, rather than to his own strength. But the verdicts of the last and present generation of historians, educated with hatred of irresponsible power, may be again reversed, and Louis XIV. may loom up in another age, if not as the *grand monarque* whom his contemporaries worshipped, yet as a man of great natural abilities who made fatal mistakes, and who, like Napoleon after

him, alternately elevated and depressed the nation over which he was called to reign, — not like Napoleon, as a usurper and a fraud, but as an honest, though proud and ambitious, sovereign, who was supposed to rule by divine right, of whom the nations of Europe were jealous, who lived in fear and hatred of his power, and who finally conspired, not to rob him of his throne and confine him to a rock, but to take from him the provinces he had seized and the glory in which he shone.

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LOUIS XV.

A. D. 1710–1774.

REMOTE CAUSES OF REVOLUTION.

LOUIS XV.

REMOTE CAUSES OF REVOLUTION.

IT is impossible to contemplate the inglorious reign of Louis XV. otherwise than as a more complete development of the egotism which marked the life of his immediate predecessor, and a still more fruitful nursery of those vices and discontents which prepared the way for the French Revolution. It is in fact in connection with that great event that this reign should be considered. The fabric of despotism had already been built by Richelieu, and Louis XIV. had displayed and gloried in its dazzling magnificence, even while he undermined its foundations by his ruinous wars and courtly extravagance. Under Louis XV. we shall see even greater recklessness in profitless expenditures, and more complete abandonment to the pleasures which were purchased by the burdens and sorrows of his people; we shall see the monarch and his court still more subversive of the prosperity and dignity of the nation, and even indifferent to the signs of that coming

storm which, later, overturned the throne of his grandson, Louis XVI.

And Louis XV. was not only the author of new calamities, but the heir of seventy years' misrule. All the evils which resulted from the wars and wasteful extravagance of Louis XIV. became additional perplexities with which he had to contend. But these evils, instead of removing, he only aggravated by follies which surpassed all the excesses of the preceding reign. If I were asked to point out the most efficient though indirect authors of the French Revolution, I would single out those royal tyrants themselves who sat upon the throne of Henry IV. during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I shall proceed to state the principal events and features which have rendered that reign both noted and ignominious.

In contemplating the long reign of Louis XV., — whom I present as a necessary link in the political history of the eighteenth century, rather than as one of the Beacon Lights of civilization, — we first naturally turn our eyes to the leading external events by which it is marked in history; and we have to observe, in reference to these, that they were generally unpropitious to the greatness and glory of France. Nearly all those which emanated from the government had an unfortunate or disgraceful issue. No success attended the French arms in any quarter of the world,

with the exception of the victories of Marshal Saxe at Fontenoy (1745); and the French lost the reputation they had previously acquired under Henry IV., Condé, Turenne, and Luxembourg. Disgrace attended the generals who were sent against Frederic II., in the Seven Years' War, even greater than what had previously resulted from the contests with the English and the Dutch, and which were brought to a close by the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748. But it was not on the fields of Germany that the greatest disasters happened; the French were rifled of their possessions both in America and in India. Louisbourg yielded to the bravery of New England troops, and finally Canada itself was lost. All dreams of establishing a new empire on the Mississippi and the Gulf of St. Lawrence vanished for ever, while Madras and Calcutta fell into the hands of the English, with all the riches of Mahometan and Mogul empires. During the regency of the Duke of Orleans, — for Louis XV. was an infant five years of age when his great-grandfather died in 1715, — we notice the disgraceful speculations which followed the schemes of Law, and which resulted in the ruin of thousands, and the still greater derangement of the national finances. The most respectable part of the reign of Louis XV. were those seventeen years when the administration was in the hands of Cardinal Fleury, who succeeded the Duke of Bourbon, to whom the

reins of government had been intrusted after the death of the Duke of Orleans, two years before the young King had attained his majority. Though the cardinal was a man of peace, was irreproachable in morals, patriotic in his intentions, and succeeded in restoring for a time the credit of the country, still even he only warded off difficulties, — like Sir Robert Walpole, — instead of bravely meeting them before it should be too late. His timid rule was a negative rather than a positive blessing. But with his death ended all prosperity, and the reign of mistresses and infamous favorites began, — the great feature of the times, on which I shall presently speak more fully, as one of the indirect causes of subsequent revolution.

In singling out and generalizing the evils and public misfortunes of the reign of Louis XV., perhaps the derangement of the finances was the most important in its political results. But for this misfortune the King was not wholly responsible: a vast national debt was the legacy of Louis XIV. This was the fruit of his miserable attempt at self-aggrandizement; this was the residuum of his glories. Yet as a national debt, according to some, is no calamity, but rather a blessing, — a chain of loyalty and love to bind the people together in harmonious action and mutual interest, and especially the middle classes, upon whom it chiefly falls, to the support of a glorious throne, — we must not waste time

by dwelling on the existence of this debt, — a peculiarity which has attended the highest triumphs of civilization, an invention of honored statesmen and patriotic ministers, and perhaps their benignant boon to future generations, — but rather we will look to the way it was sought to be discharged.

Louis XIV. spent in wars fifteen hundred millions of livres, and in palaces about three hundred millions more; and his various other expenses, which could not be well defrayed by taxation, swelled the amount due to his creditors, at his death, to nearly two thousand millions, — a vast sum for those times. The regent, Duke of Orleans, who succeeded him, increased this debt still more, especially by his reckless and infamous prodigalities, under the direction of his prime minister, — his old friend and tutor, — Cardinal Dubois. At last his embarrassments were so great that the wheels of government were likely to stop. His friend, the Duc de Saint Simon, one of the great patricians of the court, proposed, as a remedy, national bankruptcy, — affirming that it would be a salutary lesson to the rich plebeian capitalists not to lend their money. An ingenious Scotch financier, however, proposed a more palatable scheme, which was, to make use of the credit of the nation for a bank, the capital of which should be guaranteed by shares in the Mississippi Company. John Law, already a wealthy and prosperous banker, proposed to increase the paper

currency, and supersede the use of gold and silver. His offer was accepted, and his bank became a royal one, its bills going at once into circulation. Now, as the most absurd delusions existed as to the wealth of Louisiana, and the most boundless faith was placed in Law's financiering; and as only Law's bills could purchase shares in the Company which was to make everybody's fortune, — gold and silver flowed to his bank. The shares of the Company continued to rise in value, and bank-bills were indefinitely issued. In a little while (1719), six hundred and forty millions of livres in these bills were in circulation, and soon after nearly half of the national debt was paid off; in other words, people had been induced to exchange government securities, to the amount of eight hundred millions, for the Mississippi stock. They sold consols at Law's bank, and were paid in his bills, with which they bought shares. The bills of the bank were of course redeemable in gold and silver; but for a time nobody wanted gold and silver, so great was the credit of the bank. Moreover, the bank itself was guaranteed by the shares of the Company, which were worth at one period twelve times their original value. John Law, of course, was regarded as a national benefactor. His financiering had saved a nation; and who had ever before heard of a nation being saved by stock-jobbing? All sorts of homage and

honors were showered upon so great a man. His house was thronged with dukes and peers; he became controller-general of the finances, and virtually prime-minister. He was elected a member of the French Academy; his fame extended far and wide, for he was a beneficent deity that had made everybody rich and no one poor. Surely the golden age had come. Paris was crowded with strangers from all parts of the world, who came to see a man whose wisdom surpassed that of Solomon, and who made silver and gold to be as stones in the streets. As everybody had grown rich, twelve hundred new coaches were set up; nothing was seen but new furniture and costly apparel, nothing was felt but universal exhilaration. So great was the delusion, that the stock of the Mississippi Company reached the almost fabulous amount of three thousand six hundred millions, — nearly twice the amount of the national debt. But as Law's bank, where all these transactions were made, revealed none of its transactions, the public were in ignorance of the bills issued and stock created.

At last, the Prince of Conti, — one of the most powerful of the nobles, and a prince of the blood-royal, who had received enormous amounts in bills as the price of his protection, — annoyed to find that his ever-increasing demands were finally resisted, presented his notes at the bank, and of course obtained gold and silver; then other nobles did the same, and then foreign merchants,

until the bank was drained. Then came the panic, then the fall of stocks, then general ruin, then universal despondency and rage. The bubble had burst! Four hundred thousand families, who thought themselves rich, and who had been comfortable, were hopelessly ruined; but the State had got rid of half the national debt, and for a time was clear of embarrassment. The people, however, had been defrauded and deceived by Government, and they rendered in return their secret curses. The foundations of a throne are only secured by the affections of a people; if these are destroyed, one great element of regal power is lost.

Under the administration of Cardinal Fleury (1726–1743) the finances were somewhat improved, since he aimed at economical arrangements, especially in the collection of taxes. He attempted to imitate Sully and Colbert, but without their genius and boldness he effected but little. He had an unfortunate quarrel with the Parliament of Paris, and was obliged to repeal a favorite measure. After his death the country was virtually ruled by the King's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, who displaced ministers at her pleasure, and who encouraged unbounded extravagance. The public deficit increased continually, until it finally amounted to nearly two hundred millions in a single year. In spite of this increasing derangement of the

finances, the court had not the courage or will to face the difficulties, but resorted to new loans and forced contributions, and every form of iniquitous taxation. If a great functionary announced the necessity of economy or order, he was forthwith disgraced. Nothing irritated the court more than any proposal to reduce unnecessary expenses. Nor would any other order, either the nobles or the clergy, consent to make sacrifices.

In such a state of things, a most oppressive system of taxation was the necessary result. In no country in modern times have the burdens of the people been so great. Taxes were imposed to the utmost extent that they were able to bear, without their consent; and upon the slightest resistance or remonstrance they were imprisoned and treated as criminals. So great were the taxes on land, that nearly two-thirds of the whole gross produce, it has been estimated, went to the State, and three-quarters of the remainder to the landlord. The peasant thus only received about one-twelfth of the fruit of his labors; and on this pittance his family was supported. Taxes were both direct and indirect, levied upon every article of consumption, upon everything that was imported or exported, upon income, upon capital, upon the transmission of property, upon even the few privileges which were enjoyed. But not one-half that was collected went to the royal treasury;

it was wasted by the different collectors and sub-collectors. In addition to the ordinary burdens were enormous monopolies, granted to nobles and courtiers, by which the income of the State was indirectly plundered. The poor man groaned amid his heavy labors and great privations, without exciting compassion or securing redress.

And, in addition to his taxes, the laborer was deprived of all the privileges of freedom. He was injured, down-trodden, mocked, and insulted. The laws were unequal, and gave him no security; game of the most destructive kind was permitted to run at large through the fields, and yet the people were not allowed to shoot a hare or a deer upon their own grounds. Numerous edicts prohibited hoeing and weeding, lest young partridges should be destroyed. The people were bound to repair the roads without compensation, to grind their corn at the landlord's mill, bake their bread in his ovens, and carry their grapes to his wine-press. They had not the benefit of schools, or of institutions which would enable them to improve their minds. They could not rise above the miserable condition in which they were born, or even make their complaints heard. Feudalism, in all its social distinctions, and in all its oppressive burdens, crushed them as with an iron weight, or bound them as with iron fetters. This weight they could not throw off, these fetters they

could not break. There was no alternative but in submission, — forced submission to overwhelming taxes, robberies, insults, and injustice, both from landed proprietors and the officers of the crown.

Those, however, who lived upon the unrequited toil of the people lived out of sight of their sorrows, — not in beautiful châteaux, as their ancestors did, by the side of placid rivers and on the skirts of romantic forests, or amid vineyards and olive-groves, but in the capital or the court. Here, like Roman senators of old, they squandered the money which they had obtained by extortion and corruption of every sort. Amid the palaces of Versailles they displayed all the vanities of dress, all the luxuries of their favored life. Here, as lesser stars, they revolved around the great central orb of regal splendor, proud to belong to another world than that in which the plebeian millions toiled and suffered. At Versailles they attempted to ignore their own humanity, to forget their most pressing duties, and to despise the only pursuits which could have elevated their minds or warmed their hearts.

But they were not great feudal nobles, like the Guises and the Epernons, such as combined to awe even regal power under the House of Valois, — men who could coin money and exercise judicial authority in their own domain, — but timid and subservient courtiers, as embarrassed in their affairs as was the King himself.

Nevertheless, many of the ancient privileges of feudalism were enjoyed by them. They were exempt from many taxes which oppressed merchants and farmers; they alone were appointed to command in the army and navy; they alone were made prelates and dignitaries in the Church; they were comparatively free from arrest when their crimes were against society and God rather than the government; they were distinguished from the plebeian class by dress as well as by privileges; and they only had access to court and a share in the plunder of the kingdom. Craving greater excitements than that which even Versailles afforded, they built, in the Faubourg St. Germain, those magnificent hotels which are still the dreary but imposing monuments of aristocratic pride; and here they plunged into every form of excess and folly for which Paris has always been distinguished. But it was in their splendid equipages, and in their boxes at the opera, that they displayed the most striking contrast to the habits of the plebeian people with whom they were surrounded. Their embroidered vests, their costly silks and satins, their emerald and diamond buckles, their point-lace ruffles, their rare furs, their jewelled rapiers, and their perfumed handkerchiefs were peculiar to themselves, — for in those days wealthy shopkeepers, and even the daughters of prosperous notaries, could ill afford such luxuries, and were scarcely allowed to

shine in them if they would. A velvet coat then cost more than one thousand francs; while the ruffs and frills, and diamond studs and knee-buckles, and other appendages to the dress of a gentleman, swelled the amount to scarcely less than forty thousand francs, or sixteen hundred louis-d'or. If a distinguished advocate was admitted to the presence of royalty, he must appear in simple black. Gorgeous dresses were reserved only for the *noblesse*, some one hundred and fifty thousand privileged persons; all the rest were *roturiers*, marked by some emblem of meanness or inferiority, whatever might be their intellectual and moral worth. Never were the *noblesse* more enervated; and yet they always appeared in a mock-heroic costume, with swords dangling at their sides, or hats cocked after a military fashion on their heads. As the strength of Samson of old was in his locks, so the degenerate nobles of this period guarded with especial care these masculine ornaments of the person; and so great was the contagion for wigs and hair-powder, that twelve hundred shops existed in Paris to furnish this aristocratic luxury. The muses of Rome in the days of her decline condescended to sing on the arts of cookery and the sublime occupations of hunting and fishing; so in the heroic times of Louis XV. the genius of France soared to comprehend the mysteries of the toilet. One eminent *savant*, in this department of philosophical

wisdom, absolutely published a bulky volume on the *principles* of hair-dressing, and followed it — so highly was it prized — by a no less ponderous supplement. This was the time when the *cuisine* of nobles was as famous as their toilets, and when recipes for different dishes were only equalled in variety by the epigrams of ribald poets. It was a period not merely of degrading follies, but of shameless exposure of them, — when men boasted of their gallantries, and women joked at their own infirmities; and when hypocrisy, if it was ever added to their other vices, only served to make them more ridiculous and unnatural. The rouge with which they painted their faces, and the powder which they sprinkled upon their hair were not used to give them the semblance of youthful beauty, but rather to impart the purple hues of perpetual drunkenness, such as Rubens gave to his Bacchanalian deities, united with the blanched whiteness of premature old age. Licentiousness without shame, drunkenness without rebuke, gambling without honor, and frivolity without wit characterized, alas, a great proportion of that "upper class" who disdained the occupations and sneered at the virtues of industrial life.

But these dissipated courtiers had a model constantly before their eyes, whose more excessive follies it were difficult to rival; and this was the King himself, whom the whole nation was called upon to obey.

If Louis XIV. was a Nebuchadnezzar, unapproachable from pride, Louis XV. was a Sardanapalus in effeminacy and insouciant revelries. The shameless infamies of his life were too revolting to bear more than a passing allusion; and I should blush to tear away the historic veil which covers up his vices from the common eye. I shrink from showing to what depths humanity can sink, even when clothed in imperial purple and seated on the throne of state. The countless memoirs of that wicked age have however, exposed to the indignant eye of posterity the regal debaucheries of Versailles and the pollutions of the Parc aux Cerfs,—that infamous seraglio which cost the State one hundred millions of livres, at the lowest estimate. And this was but a part of the great system of waste and folly. Five hundred millions of the national debt were incurred for expenses too ignominious to be even named. The King, however, was not fond of pomp; it was fatiguing for him to bear, and he generally shut himself from the sight and intercourse of any but convivial friends, — no, not friends, for to absolute monarchs the pleasures of friendship are denied; I should have said, the panderers to his degrading pleasures. Never did the Papal court at Avignon or Rome, even in the worst ages of mediæval darkness, witness more scandalous enormities than those which disgraced the whole reign of Louis XV., either in the days of his minority, when

the kingdom was governed by the Duke of Orleans, or in his latter years, when the Duke of Choiseul was the responsible adviser of the crown. The Palais Royal, the Palais Luxembourg, the Trianon, and Versailles were alternately scenes of excesses which would have disgraced the reigns of the most degenerate of Saracenic caliphs. So vile was the court, that a celebrated countess one day said, at a public festival, that "God, after having formed man, took the mud which was left, and made the souls of princes and footmen."

And the King hated business as much as he hated pomp. Unlike his predecessor, he left everything in the hands of his servants. Nothing wearied him so much as an interview with a minister, or a dispatch from a general. In the society of his mistresses he abnegated his duties as a monarch, and the labors of his life were employed in gratifying their resentments and humoring their caprices. Their complaints were more potent than the suggestions of ministers, or the remonstrances of judges. In idle frivolities his time was passed, neglectful of the great interests which were intrusted to him to guard; and the only attainment of which he was proud was a knack of making tarts and bon-bons, with which he frequently regaled his visitors.

And yet, in spite of these ignoble tastes and pursuits, the King was by no means deficient in natural

abilities. He was much superior to even Louis XIV. in logical acumen and sprightly wit. He was an agreeable companion, and could appreciate every variety of talents. No man in his court perceived more clearly than he the tendency of the writings of philosophers which were then fermenting the germs of revolution. "His sagacity kept him from believing in Voltaire, even when he succeeded in deceiving the King of Prussia." He was favorable to the Jesuits, though he banished them from the realm; perceiving and feeling that they were his true friends and the best supports of his absolute throne, — and yet he banished them from his kingdom. He was hostile too, in his heart, to the very philosophers whom he invited to his table, and knew that they sought to undermine his power. He simply had not the moral energy to carry out the plans of that despotism to which he was devoted. Sensuality ever robs a man of the advantages and gifts which reason gives, even though they may be bestowed to an extraordinary degree. There is no more impotent slavery than that to which the most gifted intellects have been occasionally doomed. Self-indulgence is sure to sap every element of moral strength, and to take away from genius itself all power, except to sharpen the stings of self-reproach. "Louis XV. was not insensible to the dangers which menaced his throne, and would have despoiled the Parliament of the right of remonstrance;

would have imposed on the Jansenists the yoke of Papal supremacy; would have burned the books of the philosophers, and have sent their authors to work out their system within the gloomy dungeons of the Bastille;" but he had not the courage, nor the moral strength, nor the power of will. He was enslaved by his vices, and by those who pandered to them; and he could not act either the king or the man. Seeing the dangers, but feeling his impotence, he affected levity, and exclaimed to his courtiers *Après nous le déluge*, — a prediction which only uncommon sagacity could have prompted. Immersed however in unworthy pleasures, he gave himself not much concern for the future; and this career of self-abandonment continued to the last, even after satiety and *ennui* had deprived the appetites of the power to please. His latter days were of course melancholy, and his miseries resulted as much from the perception of the evils to come as from the failure of the pleasures of sense. A languor, from which he was with difficulty ever roused, oppressed his life. Deaf, incapable of being amused, prematurely worn out with bodily infirmities, hated and despised by the whole nation, he dragged out his sixty-fourth year, and died of the small-pox, which he caught in one of his visits to the Parc aux Cerfs; and his loathsome remains were hastily hurried into a carriage, and deposited in the vaults of St. Denis.

After the painting by Benczur Gyula

LOUIS XV. IN THE BOUDOIR OF MADAME DU BARRY

As, however, during this long reign of fifty-eight years, women were the presiding geniuses of the court and the virtual directors of the kingdom, I cannot give a faithful portrait of the times without some allusion, at least, to that woman who was as famous in her day as Madame de Montespan was during the most brilliant period of the reign of Louis XIV. I single out Madame de Pompadour from the crowd of erring and infirm females who bartered away their souls for the temporary honors of Versailles. Not that proud peeress whom she displaced, the Duchesse de Châteauroux; not that low-born and infamous character by whom she was succeeded, Du Barry; not the hundreds of other women who were partners or victims of guilty pleasures, and who descended unlamented and unhonored to their ignominious graves, are here to be alluded to. But Madame de Pompadour is a great historical personage, because with her are identified the fall of the Jesuits in France, the triumph of philosophers and economists, the disgrace of ministers, and the most outrageous prodigality which ever scandalized a nation. Louis XV. was almost wholly directed by this infamous favorite. She named and displaced the controllers-general, and she herself received annually nearly fifteen hundred thousand livres, besides hotels, palaces, and estates. She was allowed to draw bills upon the treasury without specifying the service, and those who incurred

her displeasure were almost sure of being banished from the court and kingdom, and perhaps sentenced, by *lettre de cachet*, to the dreary cells of the Bastille. She virtually had the appointment of the prelates of the Church and of the generals of the army; and so great was her ascendency that all persons, whatsoever their rank, found it expedient to pay their homage to her. Even Montesquieu praised her intellect, and Voltaire her beauty, and Maria Theresa wrote flattering letters to her. The prime minister was her tool and agent, since royalty itself yielded to her sway; even the proud ladies of the royal family condescended to flatter and to honor her. Sprung only from the middle ranks of society, she yet assumed the airs of a princess of the blood.

From her earliest years, long before she was admitted to the court, it had been the dream of this woman to seduce the King. Her father was butcher to the Invalides, and she spent nearly all the money she could command in a costly present to a great duchess, the Princess Conti, in order to be presented. She played high, and won — not a royal heart, but the royal fancy. Her dress, manners, and extraordinary beauty increased the impression she had once before made at a hunting-party; and after the levée she was sent for, and became virtually the minister of the realm. She was unquestionably a woman of great intellect,

as well as of tact and beauty, and even manifested a sympathy with some sorts of intellectual excellence. She was the patroness of artists, philosophers, and poets; but she liked those best who were distinguished for their infidel or licentious speculations. She was the friend of those economists and philosophers who sapped the foundations of the social system. An imperious and insolent hauteur and reckless prodigality were her most marked peculiarities, — just such as were to be expected in an unprincipled woman raised suddenly to high position. In spite of her power, she did not escape the malignant stings of envenomed rivals or anonymous satirists. "She was rallied on the baseness of her origin; she avenged herself by making common cause with those philosophers who overturned the ancient order." She was both mistress and politician, but her politics and alliances subverted the throne which gave her all her glory. Her ascendency of course rested on her power of administering to the tastes and pleasures of the King, and she showed genius in the variety of amusements which she invented. She reigned twenty years, and lost her empire only by death. Madame de Maintenon had maintained her ascendency over Louis XIV. by the exercise of those virtues which extorted his respect, but Madame de Pompadour by the faculty of charming the senses. It was by her that Versailles was enriched with the most precious and

beautiful of its countless wonders. Her own collection of pictures, cameos, antiques, crystals, porcelains, vases, gems, and articles of *vertu* was esteemed the richest and most valuable in the kingdom, and after her death it took six months to dispose of it. Her library was valued at more than a million of francs, and contained some of the rarest manuscripts and most curious books in France. The sums, however, which she spent on literary curiosities or literary men were small compared with the expenses of her toilet, of her *fêtes*, her balls, and her palaces. And all these expenses were open as the day in the eyes of a nation suffering from ruinous taxation, from famine, and the shame of unsuccessful war!

We are impressed with the blind and suicidal measures which all those connected with the throne instigated or encouraged in this reign, — from the King to the most infamous of his mistresses. Whoever pretended to give his aid to the monarchy helped to subvert it by the very measures which he proposed. "The Duke of Orleans, when he patronized Law, gave a shock to the whole economical system of the old régime. When this Scotch financier said to the powerful aristocracy around him, 'Silver is only to you the means of circulation, beyond this it belongs to the country,' he announced the ruin of the glebe and the fall of feudal prejudices. The bankruptcies which

followed the bursting of his bubble weakened the potent charm of the word 'honor,' on which was based the stability of the throne." The courtiers, when they blazed in jewels, in embroidered silks and satins, in sumptuous equipages, and in all the costly ornaments of their times, gave employment and importance to a host of shopkeepers and handicraftsmen, who grew rich, as those who bought of them grew poor. The wealth of bankers, brokers, mercers, jewellers, tailors, and coach-makers dates to these times, — those prosperous and fortunate members of the middle-class who "inhabited the Place Vendôme and the Place des Victoires, as the nobles dwelt in the Rue de Grenelle and the Rue St. Dominique. The nobles ruined themselves by the extravagance into which they were led by the court, and their châteaux and parks fell into the hands of financiers, lawyers, and merchants, who, taking the titles of their new estates, became a parvenu aristocracy which excited the jealousy of the old and divided its ranks." The inferior, but still prosperous class, the shopkeepers, also equally advanced in intelligence and power. In those dark and dingy back-rooms, in which for generations their ancestors had been immured, they now discussed their rights, and retailed the scandals which they heard. They read the sarcasms of the poets and the theories of the new philosophers. Even the tranquillity which succeeded

inglorious war was favorable to the rise of the middle classes; and the Revolution was as much the product of the discontent engendered by social improvements as of the frenzy produced by hunger and despair. The court favored the improvements of Paris, especially those designed for public amusements. The gardens of the Tuileries were embellished, the Champs Elysées planted with trees, and pictures were exhibited in the grand salon of the Louvre. The Théâtre Français, the Royal Opera, the Opéra Comique, and various halls for balls and festivals were then erected, — those fruitful nurseries of future clubs, those poisoned wells of popular education. Nor were charities forgotten with the building of the Pantheon and the extension of the Boulevards. The Hôpital des Enfants-Trouvés allowed mothers, unseen and unheard, to bequeath their children to the State.

There were two events connected with the reign of Madame de Pompadour — I do not say of the King, or his queen, or his ministers, for philosophical history compels us to confine our remarks chiefly to great controlling agencies, whether they be sovereigns or people; to such a man as Peter the Great, when one speaks of a semi-barbarous nation, to ideas, when we describe popular revolutions — which had a great influence in unsettling the kingdom, although brought about in no inconsiderable measure by this unscrupulous mistress

of the King. These were the expulsion of the Jesuits, and the triumph of the philosophers.

In regard to the first, I would say, that Madame de Pompadour did not like the Jesuits; not because they were the enemies of liberal principles, not because they were the most consistent advocates and friends of despotism in all its forms, intellectual, religious, and political, or the writers of casuistic books, or the perverters of educational instruction, or boastful missionaries in Japan and China, or cunning intriguers in the courts of princes, or artful confessors of the great, or uncompromising despots in the schools,— but because they interfered with her ascendency. It is true she despised their sophistries, ridiculed their pretensions, and detested their government; but her hostility was excited, not because they aspired like her, like the philosophers, like the popes, like the press in our times, to a participation in the government of the world, but because they disputed her claims as one of the powers of the age. The Jesuits were scandalized that such a woman should usurp the reins of state, especially when they perceived that she mocked and defied them; and they therefore refused to pay her court, and even conspired to effect her overthrow. But they had not sufficiently considered the potency of her wrath, or the desperate means of revenge to which she could resort; nor had they considered those other in-

fluences which had been gradually undermining their influence, — even the sarcasms of the Jansenists, the ridicule of the philosophers, and the invectives of the parliaments. Only one or two favoring circumstances were required to kindle the smothered fires of hatred into a blazing flame, and these were furnished by the attempted assassination of the King, in his garden at Versailles, by Damiens the fanatic, and the failure of La Valette the Jesuit banker and merchant at Martinique. Then, when the nation was astounded by their political conspiracies and their commercial gambling, to say nothing of the perversion of their truth, did their arch-enemy, the King's mistress, use her power over the King's minister, her own creature, the Duc de Choiseul, to decree the confiscation of their goods and their banishment from the realm; nay, to induce the Pope himself, in conjunction with the entreaties of all the Bourbon courts of Europe, to take away their charter and suppress their order. The fall of the Jesuits has been already alluded to in another volume, and I will not here enlarge on that singular event brought about by the malice of a woman whom they had ventured to despise. It is easy to account for her hatred and the general indignation of Europe. It is not difficult to understand that the decline of that great body in those virtues which originally elevated them, should be followed by animosities which

would undermine their power. We can see why their moral influence should pass away, even when they were in possession of dignities and honors and wealth. But it is a most singular fact that the Pope himself, with whose interests they were allied, — their natural protector, the head of the hierarchy which they so constantly defended, — should have been made the main agent in their temporary humiliation. Yet Clement XIV. — the weak and timid Ganganelli — was forced to this suicidal act. Old Hildebrand would have fought like a lion and died like a dog, rather than have stooped to such autocrats as the Bourbon princes. A judicial and mysterious blindness, however, was sent upon Clement; his strength for the moment was paralyzed, and he signed the edict which dispersed the best soldiers that sustained the interests of absolutism in Europe.

The effect of the suppression of the order in France was both good and ill. The event unquestionably led to the propagation of an impious philosophy and all sorts of crude opinions and ill-digested theories, both in government and religion, in the schools, the salons, and the pulpits of France. The press, relieved of its most watchful and jealous spies, teemed with pamphlets and books of the most licentious character. The good and evil powers were both unchained and suffered to go free about the land, and to do what work they could.

There are many who feel that this combat is necessary for the full development of human strength and virtue; who maintain that the good is much more powerful than the evil in any age of moral experiences; and who believe that angels of light will, on our mundane arena, prevail over angels of darkness, — that one truth is stronger than one thousand lies, and that two can put ten thousand to flight. There are others, again, who think that there is a vitality in error as well as a vitality in truth, as proved seemingly by the prevalence of Pagan falsehoods, Mohammedan empires, and Papal superstitions. But to whatever party clearness of judgment belongs, one thing is historically certain, — that never was poor human nature more puzzled by false guides, more tempted by appetites and passions, more enslaved by the lust of the eye and the pride of life, than during the latter years of the reign of Louis XV. Never was there a period or a country in Christendom more frivolous, pleasure-seeking, sceptical, irreligious, vain, conceited, and superficial than during the reign of Madame de Pompadour. No; never was there a time of so little moral elevation among the great mass, or when so few great enterprises were projected for the improvement of society.

And it was from society thus disordered, inexperienced, and godless that all restraints were removed from the ancient and venerated guardians of youth,

of religion, and of literature. Judge what must have been the effects; judge between these opposing theories, whether it were better to have the institutions of society guarded by selfish, ambitious, and narrow-minded priests, or to have the flood-gates of vastly preponderating evil influences opened upon society already reeling in the intoxication of the senses, or madly raving from the dethronement of reason, the abnegation of religious duties, and the extinction of the light of faith. I would not say that either one or the other of these horrible alternatives is necessary or probable in these times, that *we* are compelled to choose between them, or that we ever shall be compelled; but simply, that, in the middle of the eighteenth century, and in France,—that semi-Catholic and semi-infidel nation,—there existed on the one hand a most execrable spiritual despotism exercised by the Jesuits, and on the other a boundless ferment of destructive and revolutionary principles, operating on a people generally inclined, and in some cases abandoned, to every folly and vice. This despotism, while it was selfish and unwarrantable, still had in view the guardianship of morals and literature,—to restrain men from crimes by working on their fears; but society, while it sought to free itself from hypocritical and oppressive leaders, also sought to remove all social and moral restraints, and to plunge into reckless and dangerous experiments.

It was a war between these two social powers, — between unlawful despotism and unsanctified license. We are to judge, not which was the better, but which was the worse.

One thing, however, is certain, — that Madame de Pompadour, in whom was centred so much power, threw her influence against the Jesuits, and in favor of those who were not seeking to build up literature and morals on a sure and healthy foundation, but rather secretly and artfully to undermine the whole intellectual and social fabric, under the plea of liberty and human rights. Everybody admits that the writings of the philosophers gave a great impulse to the revolutionary storm which afterwards broke out. Ideas are ever most majestic, whether they are good or evil. Men pass away, but principles are indestructible and of perpetual power. As great and fearful agencies in the period we are contemplating, they are worthy of our notice.

Although the great lights which adorned the literature of the preceding reign no longer shone, — such geniuses as Molière, Boileau, Racine, Fénelon, Bossuet, Pascal, and others, — still the eighteenth century was much more intellectual and inquiring than is generally supposed. Under Louis XIV. intellectual independence had been nearly extinguished. His reign was intellectually and spiritually a gloomy calm between two won-

derful periods of agitation. All acquiesced in his cold, heartless, rigid rule, being content to worship him as a deity, or absorbed in the excitements of his wars, or in the sorrows and burdens which those wars brought in their train. But under Louis XV. the people began to meditate on the causes of their miseries, and to indulge in those speculations which stimulated their discontents or appealed to their intellectual pride. Not from La Rochelle, not from the cells of Port Royal, not from remonstrating parliaments did the voices of rebellion come: the genius of Revolution is not so poor as to be obliged to make use of the same class of instruments, or repeat the same experiments, in changing the great aspects of human society. Nor will she allow, if possible, those who guard the fortresses which she wishes to batter down to be suspicious of her combatants. Her warriors are ever disguised and masked, or else concealed within some form of a protecting deity, such as the fabled horse which the doomed Trojans received within their walls. The court of France did not recognize in those plausible philosophers, whose writings had such a charm for cultivated intellect, the miners and sappers of the monarchy. Only one class of royalists understood them, and these were the Jesuits whom the court had exiled. Not even Frederic the Great, when he patronized Voltaire, was aware what an insidious foe was domiciled in his palace,

with all his sycophancy of rank, with all his courtly flattering. In like manner, when the grand seigneurs and noble dames of that aristocratic age wept over the sorrows of the "New Héloïse," or craved that imaginary state of untutored innocence which Rousseau so morbidly described, or admired those brilliant generalizations of laws which Montesquieu had penned, or laughed at the envenomed ironies of Voltaire, or quoted the atheistic doctrines of D'Alembert and Diderot, or enthusiastically discussed the economical theories of Dr. Quesnay and old Marquis Mirabeau, — that stern father of him who, both in his intellectual power and moral deformity, was alike the exponent and the product of the French Revolution, — when the blinded court extolled and diffused the writings of these new apostles of human rights, they little dreamed that they would be still more admired among the people, and bring forth the Brissots, the Condorcets, the Marats, the Dantons, the Robespierres, of the next generation. I would not say that their influence was wholly bad, for in their attacks on the religion and institutions of their country they subverted monstrous usurpations. But whatever was their ultimate influence, they were doubtless among the most efficient agents in overturning the throne; they were, in reality, the secret enemies of those by whom they were patronized and honored. "They cannot, indeed, claim the merit of being the first in

France who opened the eyes of the nation; for Fénelon had taught even to Louis XIV., in his immortal 'Télémaque,' the duties of a king; Racine, in his 'Germanicus,' had shown the accursed nature of irresponsible despotism; Molière, in his 'Tartuffe,' had exposed the vices of priestly hypocrisy; Pascal, in his 'Provincial Letters,' had revealed the wretched sophistries of the Jesuits; Bayle even, in his 'Critical Dictionary,' had furnished materials for future sceptics."

But the hostilities of all these men were united in Voltaire, who in nearly two hundred volumes, and with a fecundity of genius perfectly amazing and unparalleled, in poetry, in history, in criticism, — yet without striking originality or profound speculations, — astonished and delighted his generation. This great and popular writer clothed his attacks on ecclesiastical power, and upon Christianity itself, in the most artistic and attractive language, — clear, simple, logical, without pedantry or ostentation, — and enlivened it with brilliant sarcasms, appealing to popular prejudices, and never soaring beyond popular appreciation. Never did a man have such popularity; never did a famous writer leave so little to posterity which posterity can value.

While Voltaire was indirectly undermining the religious convictions of mankind, the Encyclopedists more directly attacked the sources of religious belief, and openly denied what Voltaire had doubted. But neither

Diderot nor D'Alembert made such shameless assaults as the apostles of a still more atheistic school, — such men as Helvetius and the Baron d'Holbach, who advocated undisguised selfishness, and attributed all virtuous impulses to animal sensation. More dangerous still than these ribald blasphemers were those sentimental and morbid expounders of humanity of whom Rousseau was the type, — a man of more genius perhaps than any I have named, but the most egotistical of that whole generation of dreamers and sensualists who prepared the way for revolution. He was the father of those agitating ideas which spread over Europe and reached America. He gave utterance in his eloquent writings to those mighty watch-words, "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality," that equally animated Mirabeau, Robespierre, and Jefferson. But the writings of the philosophers will again be alluded to in the next lecture, as among the efficient causes of the French Revolution.

When we contemplate those financial embarrassments which arose from half a century of almost universal war, and those awful burdens which bent to the dust, in suffering and shame, the whole people of a great country; when we consider the absurd and wicked distinctions which separated man from man, and the settled hostility of the clergy to all means of intellectual and social improvement; when we re-

member the unparalleled vices of a licentious court, the ignominious negligence of the government to the happiness and wants of those whom it was its duty to protect, and the shameless insults which an infamous woman was allowed to heap upon the nation; and then when we bear in mind all the elements of disgust, of discontent, of innovation, and of reckless and impious defiance, — can we wonder that a revolution was inevitable, if society is destined to be progressive, and man ever to be allowed to break his fetters?

On that Revolution I cannot enter. I leave the subject as the winds began to howl and the rains began to fall and the floods began to rise, and all together to beat upon that house which was built upon the sand.

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PETER THE GREAT.

A. D. 1672–1725.

HIS SERVICES TO RUSSIA.

PETER THE GREAT.

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IF I were called upon to name the man who, since Charlemagne, has rendered the greatest services to his country, I should select Peter the Great. I do not say that he is one of the most interesting characters that has shone in the noble constellations of illustrious benefactors whom Europe has produced. Far otherwise: his career is not so interesting to us as that of Hildebrand, or Elizabeth, or Cromwell, or Richelieu, or Gustavus Adolphus, or William III., or Louis XIV., or Frederic II., or others I might mention. I have simply to show an enlightened barbarian toiling for civilization, a sort of Hercules cleansing Augean stables and killing Nemean lions; a man whose labors were prodigious; a very extraordinary man, stained by crimes and cruelties, yet laboring, with a sort of inspired enthusiasm, to raise his country from an abyss of ignorance and brutality. It would be difficult to find a more hard-hearted despot, and yet a more patriotic

sovereign. To me he looms up, even more than Richelieu, as an instrument of Divine Providence. His character appears in a double light, — as benefactor and as tyrant, in order to carry out ends which he deemed useful to his country, and which, we are constrained to admit, did wonderfully contribute to its elevation and political importance.

Peter the Great entered upon his inheritance as absolute sovereign of Russia, when it was an inland and even isolated state, hemmed in and girt around by hostile powers, without access to seas; a vast country indeed, but without a regular standing army on which he could rely, or even a navy, however small. This country was semi-barbarous, more Asiatic than European, occupied by mongrel tribes, living amid snow and morasses and forests, without education, or knowledge of European arts. He left this country, after a turbulent reign, with seaports on the Baltic and the Black seas, with a large and powerfully disciplined army, partially redeemed from barbarism, no longer isolated or unimportant, but a political power which the nations had cause to fear, and which, from the policy he bequeathed, has been increasing in resources from his time to ours. To-day Russia stands out as a first-class power, with the largest army in the world; a menace to Germany, a rival of Great Britain in the extension of conquests to the East,

After a contemporaneous engraving

PETER THE GREAT

threatening to seize Turkey and control the Black Sea, and even to take possession of Oriental empires which extend to the Pacific Ocean.

Nobody doubts or questions that the rise of Russia to its present proud and threatening position is chiefly owing to the genius and policy of Peter the Great. Peter was a descendant of a patriarch of the Greek Church in Russia, whose name was Romanoff, and who was his great-grandfather. His grandfather married a near relative of the Czar, and succeeded him by election. His father, Alexis, was an able man, and made war on the Turks.

Peter was a child when his father died, and his half-brother Theodore became the Czar. But Theodore reigned only a short time, and Peter succeeded him at the age of ten (1682), the government remaining in the hands of his half-sister, Sophia, a woman of great ability and intelligence, but intriguing and unscrupulous. She was aided by Prince Galitzin, the ablest statesman of Russia, who held the great office of chancellor. This prince, it would seem, with the aid of the general of the Streltzi (the ancient imperial guards) and the cabals of Sophia, conspired against the life of Peter, then seventeen years of age, inasmuch as he began to manifest extraordinary abilities and a will of his own. But the young Hercules strangled the serpent, — sent Galitzin to Siberia, confined his

sister Sophia in a convent for the rest of her days, and assumed the reins of government himself, although a mere youth, in conjunction with his brother John. That which characterized him was a remarkable precocity, greater than that of anybody of whom I have read. At eighteen he was a man, with a fine physical development and great beauty of form, and entered upon absolute and undisputed power as Czar of Muscovy.

In the years of the regency, when the government was in the hands of his half-sister, he did not give promise of those remarkable abilities and that life of self-control which afterwards marked his career.

In his earlier youth he had been surrounded with seductive pleasures, as Louis XIV. had been, by the queen-regent, with a view to *control* him, not oppose him; and he yielded to these pleasures, and is said to have been a very dissipated young man, with his education neglected. But he no sooner got rid of his sister and her adviser, Galitzin, than he seemed to comprehend at once for what he was raised up. The vast responsibilities of his position pressed upon his mind. To civilize his country, to make it politically powerful, to raise it in the scale of nations, to labor for its good rather than for his own private pleasure, seems to have animated his existence. And this aim he pursued from first to last, like a giant of destiny, without

any regard to losses, or humiliations, or defeats, or obstacles.

Chance, or destiny, or Providence, threw in his path the very person whom he needed as a teacher and a Mentor, — a young gentleman from Geneva, whom historians love to call an adventurer, but who occupied the post of private secretary to the Danish minister. Aristocratic pedants call everybody an adventurer who makes his fortune by his genius and his accomplishments. They called Thomas Becket an adventurer in the time of Henry II., and Thomas Cromwell in the reign of Henry VIII. The young secretary to the Danish minister seems to have been a man of remarkable ability, insight, and powers of fascination, based on his intelligence and on knowledge acquired in the first instance in a mercantile house, — as was the success of Thomas Cromwell and Alexander Hamilton.

It was from this young man, whose name was Lefort, whom Peter casually met at dinner at the house of the Danish envoy, that he was made acquainted with the superior discipline of the troops of France and Germany, and the mercantile greatness of Holland and England, — the two things which he was most anxious to understand; since, as he believed, on the discipline of an army and the efficiency of a navy the political greatness of his country must rest. A disciplined army would render secure the throne of abso-

lutism, and an efficient navy would open and protect his ports for the encouragement of commerce, — one of the great sources of national wealth. Without commerce and free intercourse with other countries no nation could get money; and without money even an absolute monarch could not reign as he would.

So these two young men took counsel together; and the conviction was settled in the minds of each that there could be no military discipline and no efficient military power so long as the Streltzi — those antiquated and turbulent old guards — could depose and set up monarchs. They settled it, and with the enthusiasm of young men, that before they could get rid of these dangerous troops, — only fit for Oriental or barbaric fighting, — they must create a regiment after their own liking, large enough to form the nucleus of a real European army, and yet not large enough to excite jealousy, — for Sophia was then still regent, and the youthful Peter was supposed to be merely amusing himself. The Swiss "adventurer" — one of the most enlightened men of his age, and full of genius — became colonel of this regiment; and Peter, not thinking he knew anything about true military tactics, and wishing to learn, — and not too proud to learn, being born with disdain of conventionalities and precedents, — entered the regiment as drummer, in sight of his own subjects, who perhaps looked upon the act as a

royal freak, — even as Nero practised fiddling, and Commodus archery, before the Roman people. From drummer he rose to the rank of corporal, and from corporal to sergeant, and so on through all the grades.

That is the way Peter began, — as all great men begin, at the foot of the ladder; for great as it was to be born a prince, it was greater to learn how to be a general. In this fantastic conduct we see three things: a remarkable sagacity in detecting the genius of Lefort, a masterly power over his own will, and a willingness to learn anything from anybody able and willing to teach him, — even as a rich and bright young lady, now and then, when about to assume the superintendence of a great household, condescends to study some of the details of a kitchen, those domestic arts on which depend something of that happiness which is the end and aim of married life. Many a promising domestic hearth is wrecked — such is the weakness of human nature — by the ignorance or disdain of humble acquirements, or what seem humble to fortunate women, and yet which are really steps to a proud ascendency.

We trace the ambition of Peter for commercial and maritime greatness also to a very humble beginning. Whether it was a youthful sport, subsequently directed into a great enterprise, or the plodding intention to create a navy and open seaports under his own superintendence, it would be difficult to settle. We may

call this beginning a decree of Providence, an inspiration of genius, or a passion for sailing a boat; the end was the same, as it came about, — the entrance of Russia into the family of European States.

It would seem that one day, by chance, Peter's attention was directed to a little boat laid up on the banks of a canal which ran through his pleasure-grounds. It had been built by a Dutch carpenter for the amusement of his father. This boat had a keel, — a new thing to him, — and attracted his curiosity. Lefort explained to him that it was constructed to sail against the wind. So the carpenter was summoned, with orders to rig the boat and sail it on the Moskva, the river which runs through Moscow. Peter was delighted; and he soon learned to manage it himself. Then a yacht was built, manned by two men, and it was the delight of Peter to take the helm himself. Shortly five other vessels were built to navigate Lake Peipus; and the ambition of Peter was not satisfied until a still larger vessel was procured at Archangel, in which he sailed on a cruise upon the Frozen Ocean. His taste for navigation became a passion; and once again he embarked on the Frozen Ocean in a ship, determined to go through all the gradations of a sailor's life. As he began as drummer in Lefort's regiment, so he first served as a common drudge who swept the cabin in a Dutch vessel; then he rose to the rank of a servant who kept

up the fire and lighted the pipe of the Dutch skipper; then he was advanced to the duty of unfurling and furling the sails, — and so on, until he had mastered the details of a sailor's life.

Why did he condescend to these mean details? The ambition was planted in him to build a navy under his own superintendence. Wherefore a navy, when he had no sea-ports? But he meant to have seaports. He especially needed a fleet on the Volga to keep the Turks and Tartars in awe, and another in the Gulf of Finland to protect his territories from the Swedes. We shall see how subsequently, and in due time, he conquered the Baltic from the Swedes and the Euxine from the Turks. He did not seem to have an ambition for indefinite territorial aggrandizement, but simply to extend his empire to these seas for the purpose of having a free egress and ingress to it by water. He could not Europeanize his empire without seaports, for unless Russia had these, she would remain a barbarous country, a vast Wallachia or Moldavia. The expediency and the necessity of these ports were most obvious. But how was he to get them? Only by war, aggressive war. He would seize what he wanted, since he could attain his end in no other way.

Now, I do not propose to whitewash this enlightened but unscrupulous robber. On no recognized principles of morality can he be defended, any more than can

Louis XIV. for the invasion of Flanders, or Frederic II. for the seizure of Silesia. He first resolved to seize Azof, the main port on the little sea of that name which opens out into the Black Sea, and which belonged to the Turks. It was undoubted robbery; but its possession would be an immense advantage to Russia. Of course, that seizure could not be justified either by the laws of God or the laws of nations. "Thou shalt not steal" is an eternally binding law for nations and for individuals. Peter knew that he had no right to this important city; but at the same time he knew that its possession would benefit Russia. So we are compelled to view this monarch as a robber, taking what was not his, as Ahab seized Naboth's vineyard; but taking it for the benefit of his country, which Ahab did not. He knew it was a political crime, but a crime to advance the civilization of his empire. The only great idea of his life was the welfare of his country, by any means. For his country he would sacrifice his character and public morality. Some might call this an exalted patriotism, — I call it unmitigated jesuitism; which seems to have been the creed of politicians, and even of statesmen, for the last three hundred years. All that Peter thought of was *the end;* he cared nothing for the *means.* I wonder why Carlyle or Froude has not bolstered up and defended this great hyperborean giant for doing evil that good may come. Casuistry is in

their line; the defence of scoundrels seems to be their vocation.

Well, then, bear in mind that Peter, feeling that he must have Azof for the good of Russia, irrespective of right or wrong, went straight forward to his end. Of course he knew he must have a fight with Turkey to gain this prize, and he prepared for such a fight. Turkey was not then what it is now, — ripe fruit to be gobbled up by Russia when the rest of Europe permits it; but Turkey then was a great power. At that very time two hundred thousand Turks were besieging Vienna, which would have fallen but for John Sobieski. But obstacles were nothing to Peter; they were simply things to be surmounted, at any sacrifice of time or money or men. So with the ships he had built he sailed down the River Don and attacked Azof. He was foiled, not beaten. He never seemed to know when he was beaten, and he never seemed to care. That hard, iron man marched to his object like a destiny. What he had to do was to take Azof against an army of Turks. So, having failed in the first campaign, through the treachery of one Jacobs who had been employed in the artillery, he tried it again the next year and succeeded, his army being commanded by General Gordon, a Scotchman, while he himself served only as ensign or lieutenant. This port was the key of Palus Mæotis, and opened to him the Black Sea, on which he resolved

to establish a navy. He had now an army modelled after the European fashion, according to the suggestions of Lefort, whose regiment became the model of other regiments. Five thousand men were trained and commanded by General Gordon. Lefort raised another corps of twelve thousand, from the Streltzi chiefly. These were the forces, in conjunction with the navy, with which he reduced Azof. He now returns to Moscow, and receives the congratulations of the boyars, or nobles, — that class who owned the landed property of Russia and cultivated it by serfs. He made heavy contributions on these nobles, and also on the clergy, — for it takes money to carry on a war, and money he must have somehow.

These forced contributions and the changes which were made in the army were not beheld with complacency. The old guard, the Streltzi, were particularly disgusted. The various innovations were very unpopular, especially those made in reference to the dress of the new soldiers. The result of all these innovations and discontents was a conspiracy to take his life; which, however, was seasonably detected and severely punished.

An extraordinary purpose now seized the mind of the Czar, which was to travel in the various countries of Europe, and learn something more especially about ship-building, on which his heart was set. He

also wished to study laws, institutions, sciences, and arts; and in order to study them effectually, he resolved to travel incognito. Hitherto he had not been represented in the European courts; so he appointed an embassy of extraordinary magnificence to proceed in the first instance to Holland, then the foremost mercantile state of Europe. The retinue consisted of four secretaries, at the head of whom was Lefort, twelve nobles, fifty guards, and other persons, — altogether to the number of two hundred. As they travelled through Prussia they were received with great distinction, and the whole journey seems to have been a Bacchanalian progress. There were nothing but *fêtes* and banquets to his honor, and the Russians proved to have great capacity for drinking. At Königsberg he left his semi-barbaric embassy to their revels, and proceeded rapidly and privately to Holland, hired a small room — kitchen and garret — for lodgings, and established himself as journeyman carpenter, with a resolute determination to learn the trade of a ship-carpenter. He dressed like a common carpenter, and lived like one, with great simplicity. When he was not at work in the dock-yard with his broad axe, he amused himself by sailing a yacht, dressed like a Dutch skipper, with a red jacket and white trousers. He was a marked personage, even had it not been known that he was the Czar, — a tall, robust, active man of twenty-five, with a

fierce look and curling brown locks, free from all restraint, seeing but little of the ambassadors who had followed him, and passing his time with ship-builders and merchants, and adhering rigidly to all the regulations of the dock-yards. He spent nine months in this way at hard labor, and at the end of that time had mastered the art of ship-building in all its details, had acquired the Dutch language, and had seen what was worth seeing of Amsterdam,— showing an unbounded curiosity and indefatigable zeal, frequenting the markets and the shops, attending lectures in anatomy and surgery, learning even how to draw teeth; visiting museums and manufactories, holding intercourse with learned men, and making considerable proficiency in civil engineering and the science of fortification. Nothing escaped his eager inquiries. "Wat is dat?" was his perpetual exclamation. "He devoured every morsel of knowledge with unexampled voracity." Never was seen a man on this earth with a more devouring appetite for knowledge of every kind; storing up in his mind everything he saw, with a view of introducing improvements into Russia. To see this barbaric emperor thus going to school, and working with his own hands, insensible to heat and cold and weariness, with the single aim of benefiting his countrymen when he should return, is to me one of the most wonderful sights of history.

After the painting by Felix Cogen

PETER THE GREAT LEARNS THE TRADE OF SHIP CARPENTRY AT ZAARDAM

His chosen companion in these labors and visits and pleasures was also one of the most remarkable men of his age. His name was Mentchikof, — originally a seller of pies in the streets of Moscow, who attracted, by his beauty and brightness, the attention of General Lefort, and was made a page in his household, and was as such made known to the Czar, who took a fancy to him, and soon detected his great talents; so that he rose as rapidly as Joseph did in the court of Pharaoh, and became general, governor, prince, regent, with almost autocratic power. The whole subsequent reign of Peter, and of his successor, became identified with Prince Mentchikof, who was prime minister and grand vizier, and who forwarded all the schemes of his master with consummate ability.

After leaving Holland, Peter accepted an invitation of William III. to visit England, and thither he went with his embassy in royal ships, yet still affecting to travel as a private gentleman. He would accept no honors, no public receptions, no state banquets. He came to England, not to receive honors, but to add to his knowledge, and he wished to remain unfettered in his sight-seeing. In England, the same insatiable curiosity marked him as in Holland. He visits the dockyards, and goes to the theatre and the opera, and holds interviews with Quakers and attends their meetings, as well as the churches of the Establishment. The coun-

try-houses of nobles, with their parks and gardens and hedges, filled him with admiration. He was also greatly struck with Greenwich Hospital, which looked to him like a royal palace (as it was originally), and he greatly wondered that the old seedy and frowsy pensioners should be lodged so magnificently. The courts of Westminster surprised him. "Why," said he, in reference to the legal gentlemen in wigs and gowns, "I have but two lawyers in my dominions, and one of them I mean to hang as soon as I return." But while he visited everything, generally in a quiet way, avoiding display and publicity, he was most interested in mechanical inventions and the dock-yards and mock naval combats. It would seem that his private life was simple, although he is accused of eating voraciously, and of drinking great quantities of brandy and sack. If this be true, he certainly reformed his habits, and learned to govern himself, for he was very temperate in his latter days. Men who are very active and perform herculean labors, do not generally belong to the class of gluttons or drunkards. I have read of but few great generals, like Cæsar, or Charlemagne, or William III., or Gustavus Adolphus, or Marlborough, or Cromwell, or Turenne, or Wellington, or Napoleon, who were not temperate in their habits.

After leaving England, the Czar repaired to Vienna, *via* Holland, sending to Russia five hundred persons

whom he took in his employ, — navy captains, pilots, surgeons, gunners, boat-builders, blacksmiths, and various other mechanics, — having an eye to the industrial development of his country; which was certainly better than driving out of his kingdom four hundred thousand honest people, as Louis XIV. did because they were Protestants. But Peter did not tarry long in Vienna, whose military establishments he came to study, being compelled to return hastily to Moscow to suppress a rebellion. He returned a much wiser man; I doubt if any person ever was more improved than he by his travels. What an example to tourists in these times! All travelling (except explorations) is a dissipation and waste of time unless self-improvement is the main object. Pleasure-seeking is the greatest vanity on this earth, for he who *seeks* pleasure never finds it; but it comes when it is a minor consideration.

The apprenticeship of Peter is now completed, and he enters more seriously upon those great labors which have given him an immortality. I am compelled to be brief in stating them.

The first thing he did, on his return, was finally to crush the Streltzi, who fomented treasons and were hostile to reform. He had wisely left General Gordon at Moscow with six thousand soldiers, disciplined after the European fashion. In abolishing the turbulent and prejudicial Streltzi, he is accused of great cruel-

ties. He summarily executed or imprisoned some four thousand of them caught in acts of treason and rebellion, and drafted the rest into distant regiments. He may have been unnecessarily cruel, as critics have accused Oliver Cromwell of being in his treatment of the Irish. But, cruel or not, he got rid of troops he could not trust, and organized soldiers whom he could, — for he must have tools to work with if he would do his work. I neither praise nor condemn his mode of working; I seek to show how he performed his task.

After disbanding rebellious soldiers, he sought to make his army more efficient by changing the dress of the entire army. He did away with the long coat reaching to the heels, something like that which ladies wear in rainy days; and the drawers not unlike petticoats; and the long, bushy beards. He found more difficulty in making this reform than in taking Azof, although aided by Mentchikof, his favorite, fellow-traveller, and prime minister. He was not content with cutting off the beards of the soldiers and shortening their coats, — he wished to make private citizens do the same; but the uproar and discontent were so great that he was obliged to compromise the matter, and allow the citizens to wear their beards and robes on condition of a heavy tax, graded on ability to pay it. The only class he exempted from the tax were the clergy and the serfs.

Among other reforms he changed the calendar, making the year to begin with January, and abolished the old laws with reference to marriage, by which young people had no power of choice; but he decreed that no marriage should take place unless an intimacy had existed between the parties for at least six months. He instituted balls and assemblies, to soften the manners of the people. He encouraged the theatre, protected science, invited eminent men to settle in Russia, improved the courts of justice, established posts and post-offices, boards of trade, a vigorous police, hospitals, and alms-houses. He imported Saxony sheep, erected linen, woollen, and paper mills, dug canals, suppressed gambling, and fostered industry and art. He aimed to do for Russia what Richelieu and Colbert did for France.

The greatest opposition to his reforms came from the clergy, with the Patriarch at their head, — a personage of great dignity and power, ruling an *imperium in imperio*. Peter had no hostility to the Greek religion, nor to the clergy. Like Charlemagne, he was himself descended from an ecclesiastical family. But finding the clergy hostile to civil and social reforms, he sought to change the organization of the Church itself. He did not interfere with doctrines, nor discipline, nor rites, nor forms of worship; but he unseated the Patriarch, and appointed instead a consistory, the members of which were nom-

inated by himself. Like Henry VIII., he virtually made himself the head of the Church, — that is, the supreme direction of ecclesiastical affairs was given to those whom he controlled, and not to the Patriarch, whose power had been supreme in religious matters, — more than Papal, almost Druidical. In former reigns the Patriarch had the power of life and death in his own tribunals; and when he rode to church on Palm Sunday, in his emblazoned robes, the Czar walked uncovered at his side, and held the bridle of his mule. It is a mark of the extraordinary power of Peter that he was enabled to abolish this great dignity without a revolution or bloodshed; and he not only abolished the patriarchal dignity, but he seized the revenues of the Patriarch, taxed the clergy, and partially suppressed monasteries, decreeing that no one should enter them under fifty years of age; yea, he even decreed universal toleration of religion, except to the Jesuits, whom he hated, as did William III. and Frederic II. He caused the Bible to be translated into the Slavonic language, and freely circulated it. And he prosecuted these reforms while he was meditating, or was engaged in, great military enterprises.

I approach now the great external event of Peter's life, his war with Charles XII., brought about in part by his eagerness to get a seaport on the Baltic, and in part by the mad ambition of the Swedish king, determined

to play the part of Alexander. The aggressive party in this war, however, was Peter. He was resolved to take part of the Swedish territories for mercantile and maritime purposes; so he invaded Sweden with sixty thousand men. Charles, whose military genius was not appreciated by the Czar, had only eight thousand troops to oppose the invasion; but they were veterans, and fought on the defensive, and had right on their side. This latter is a greater thing in war than is generally supposed; for although war is in our own times a mechanism in a great measure, still moral considerations underlie even physical forces, and give a sort of courage which is hard to resist. The result of this invasion was the battle of Narva, when Peter was disgracefully beaten, as he ought to have been. But he bore his defeat complacently. He is reported as saying that he knew the Swedes would have the advantage at first, but that they would teach him how to beat them at last. I doubt this. I do not believe a general ever went into battle with a vastly overwhelming force when he did not expect victory. But the great victory won by Charles (a mere stripling king, scarcely nineteen) turned his head. Never was there a more intoxicated hero. He turned his victorious army upon Poland, dethroned the king, invaded Saxony, and prepared to invade Russia with an army of eighty thousand troops. His cool adversary, who since his defeat

at Narva had been prosecuting his reforms and reorganizing his army and building a navy, was more of a wily statesman than a successful general. He retreated before Charles, avoided battles, tempted him in the pursuit to dreary and sparsely inhabited districts, decoyed him into provinces remote from his base of supplies; so that at the approach of winter Charles found himself in a cold and desolate country (as Napoleon was afterwards tempted to *his* ruin), with his army dwindled down to twenty-five thousand men, while Peter had one hundred thousand, with ample provisions and military stores. The generals of Charles now implore him to return to Sweden, at least to seek winter quarters in the Ukraine; but the monarch, infatuated, lays siege to Pultowa, and gives battle to Peter, and is not only defeated, but his forces are almost annihilated, so that he finds the greatest difficulty in escaping into Turkey with a handful of followers. That battle settled the fortunes of both Charles and Peter. The one was hopelessly ruined; the other was left free to take as much territory from Sweden as he wished, to open his seaports on the Baltic, and to dig canals from river to river.

But another enemy still remained, Turkey; who sought to recover her territory on the Black Sea, and who had already declared war. Flushed with conquest, Peter in his turn became rash. He advanced to the

Turkish territory with forty thousand men, and was led into the same trap which proved the ruin of Charles XII. He suddenly finds himself in a hostile country, beyond the Pruth, between an army of Turks and an army of Tartars, with a deep and rapid river in his rear. Two hundred thousand men attack his forty thousand. He cannot advance, he cannot retreat; he is threatened with annihilation. He is driven to despair. Neither he nor his generals can see any escape, for in three days he has lost twenty thousand men, — one half his army. In all probability he and his remaining men will be captured, and he conducted as a prisoner to Constantinople, and perhaps be shown to the mocking and jeering people in a cage, as Bajazet was. In this crisis he shuts himself up in his tent, and refuses to see anybody.

He is saved by a woman, and a great woman, even Catherine his wife, who originally was a poor peasant girl in Livonia, and who after various adventures became the wife of a young Swedish officer killed at the battle of Marienburg, and then the mistress of Prince Mentchikof, and then of Peter himself, who at length married her, —"an incident," says Voltaire, "which fortune and merit never before produced in the annals of the world." She suggested negotiation, when Peter was in the very jaws of destruction, and which nobody had thought of. She collects together her jewels and all the valuables she

can find, and sends them to the Turkish general as a present, and favorable terms are secured. But Peter loses Azof, and is shut out from the Black Sea, and is compelled to withdraw from the vicinity of the Danube. The Baltic is however still open to him; and in the mean time he has transferred his capital to a new city, which he built on the Gulf of Finland.

It was during his Swedish war, about the year 1702, when he had driven the Swedes from Ladoga and the Neva, that he fixed his eyes upon a miserable morass, a delta, half under water, formed by the dividing branches of the Neva, as the future seat of his vast empire. It was a poor site for a capital city, inaccessible by water half the year, without stones, without wood, without any building materials, with a barren soil, and liable to be submerged in a storm. Some would say it was an immense mistake to select such a place for the capital of an empire stretching even to the Pacific ocean. But it was the only place he could get which opened a water communication with Western Europe. He could not Europeanize his empire without some such location for his new capital. So St. Petersburg arose above the marshes of the Neva as if by magic, built in a year, on piles, although it cost him the lives of one hundred thousand men. "We never could look on this capital," says Motley, "with its imposing though monotonous architecture, its colossal squares, its vast

colonnades, its endless vistas, its spires and minarets sheathed in barbaric gold and flashing in the sun, and remember the magical rapidity with which it was built, without recalling Milton's description of Pandemonium: —

> "'As bees
> In spring time, when the sun with Taurus rides,
> Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
> In clusters: they among fresh dews and flowers
> Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
> The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
> Now rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
> Their state affairs: so thick the aery crowd
> Swarm'd and were straighten'd; till, the signal given,
> Behold a wonder!'

"The transfer of the seat of government, by the removal of the senate from Moscow, was effected a few years afterwards. Since that time, the repudiated Oriental capital of the ancient Czars, with her golden tiara and Eastern robe, has sat, like Hagar in the wilderness, deserted and lonely in all her barbarian beauty. Yet even now, in many a backward look and longing sigh, she reads plainly enough that she is not forgotten by her sovereign, that she is still at heart preferred, and that she will eventually triumph over her usurping and artificial rival."

So writes a great historian; but to me it seems that the longing eyes of the Emperor of Russia are not

turned to the old barbaric capital, but to a still more ancient capital, — that which Constantine, with far-seeing vision, selected as the central city of the decaying empire of the Romans, easily defended, resting on both Europe and Asia, with access to the Mediterranean and Black seas; the most magnificent site for the capital of a great empire on the face of the globe, which is needed by Russia if she is to preserve her maritime power, and which nothing but the jealousy of the Western nations has prevented her from twice seizing within a single generation. We say, "Westward, the star of empire takes its way." But an empire larger in its territories than all Europe, and constantly augmenting its resources, although still Cossack, still undeveloped, has its eye on Eastern, not Western extension, until China herself, with her four thousand years of civilization and her four hundred millions of people, may become a spoil to be divided between the Emperor of Russia and the Empress of India; not as banded and united robbers divide their spoil, but the one encroaching from the West and North, and the other from the West and South.

Peter, after having realized the great objects to which he early aspired, after having founded a navy and reorganized his army, and added provinces to his empire, and partially civilized it, and given to it a new capital, now meditated a second tour of Europe, this

time to be accompanied by his wife. Thirteen years had elapsed since he worked as a ship-carpenter in the dockyards of Holland. He was now forty-three years old, still manly, vigorous, and inquiring. In 1715, just as Louis had completed his brilliant and yet unfortunate career, Peter first revisited the scene of his early labors, where he was enthusiastically received, and was afterwards entertained with great distinction at Paris. He continued his studies in art, in science, and laws, saw everything, and was particularly impressed with the tomb of Richelieu. "Great man!" apostrophizes the Czar, "I would give half of my kingdom to learn from thee how to govern the other half." Such remarks indicate that he knew something of history, and comprehended the mission of the great cardinal, — which was to establish absolutism as one of the needed forces of the seventeenth century; for it was Richelieu, hateful as is his character, who built up the French monarchy.

From Paris, Peter proceeded to Berlin, where he was received with equal attentions. He inspired universal respect, although his aspect was fierce, his habits rough, and his manners uncouth. The one thing which marked him as a great man was his force of character. He was undazzled and unseduced; plain, simple, temperate, self-possessed, and straightforward. He had not worked for himself, but for his country, and everybody knew it. His wife Catherine, also a great woman, did not make

so good an impression as he did, being fat, vulgar, and covered with jewels and orders and crosses. I suppose both of them were what we now should call "plain people." Station, power, and wealth seem to have very little effect on the manners and habits of those who have arisen by extraordinary talents to an exalted position. Nor does this position develop pride as much as is generally supposed. Pride is born in a man, and will appear if he is ever so lowly; as also vanity, the more amiable quality, which expends itself in hospitalities and ostentations. The proud Gladstone dresses like a Methodist minister, and does not seem to care what kind of a hat he wears. The vain Beaconsfield loved honors and stars and flatteries and aristocratic insignia: if he had been rich he would have been prodigal, and given great banquets. Peter made no display, and saved his money for useful purposes. It would seem that most of the Russian monarchs have retained simplicity in their private lives.

The closing years of Peter were saddened by a great tragedy, as were those of David. Both these monarchs had the misfortune to have rebellious and unworthy sons, who were heirs to the throne. Alexis was as great a trial to Peter as Absalom was to David. He was hostile to reforms, was in league with his father's enemies, and was hopelessly stupid and profligate. He was not vain, ambitious, and beautiful, like the son of

David; but coarse, in bondage to priests, fond of the society of the weak and dissipated, and utterly unfitted to rule an empire. Had he succeeded Peter, the life-work of Peter would have been wasted. His reign would have been as disastrous to Russia as that of Mary Queen of Scots would have been to England, had she succeeded Elizabeth. The patience of the father was at last exhausted. He had remonstrated and threatened to no purpose. The young man would not reform his habits, or abstain from dangerous intrigues. He got beastly drunk with convivial friends, and robbed and cheated his father whenever he got a chance.

What was Peter to do with such a rebellious, undutiful, profligate, silly youth as Alexis, — a sot, a bigot, and a liar? Should he leave to him the work of carrying out his policy and aims? It would be weakness and madness. It seemed to him that he had nothing to do but disinherit him. In so doing, he would render no injustice. Alexis had no claim to the throne, like the eldest son of Victoria. The throne belonged to Peter. He had no fetters on him like a feudal sovereign; he could elect whom he pleased to inherit his vast empire. It was not his son he loved best, but his country. He had the right to appoint any successor he pleased, and he would naturally select one who would carry out his plans and rule ably. So he dis-

inherited his eldest son Alexis, and did it in virtue of the power which he imagined he had received, like an old Jewish patriarch, from God Almighty. There was no law of Russia designating the eldest son as the Czar's successor. No one can reasonably blame Peter for disinheriting this worthless son, whom he had ceased to love, — whom he even despised.

Having disinherited him, out of regard to public interests more than personal dislike, the question arises, what shall he do with him? Shall he shut him in a state-prison, or confine him to a convent, or make way with him? One of these terrible alternatives he must take. What struggles of his soul to decide which were best! We pity a man compelled to make such a choice. Any choice was bad, and full of perils and calumnies. Whatever way he turned was full of obstacles. If he should shut him up, the priests and humiliated boyars and other intriguing rascals might make him emperor after Peter's death, and thus create a counter reformation, and upset the work of Peter's life. If he should make way with Alexis, the curses of his enemies and the execrations of Europe and posterity would follow him as an unnatural father. David, with his tender nature and deep affection, would have spared Absalom if all the hosts of Israel had fallen and his throne were overturned. But Peter was not so weak as David; he was stern and severe. He decided to bring his son to

trial for conspiracy and rebellion. The court found him guilty. The ministers, generals, and senators of the empire pronounced sentence of death upon him. Would the father have used his prerogative and pardoned him? That we can never know. Some think that Peter did not intend to execute the sentence. At any rate, he was mercifully delivered from his dilemma. Alexis, frightened and apparently contrite, was seized with a fit of apoplexy, and died imploring his father's pardon.

This tragedy is regarded as the great stain on the reign of Peter. It shocked the civilized world. I do not wish to exculpate Peter from cruelty or hard-heartedness; I would neither justify him nor condemn him. In this matter, I think, he is to be judged by the supreme tribunal of Heaven. I do not know enough to acquit or condemn him. All I know is, that his treatment of his son was both a misfortune and a stain on his memory. The people to decide this point are those rich fathers who have rebellious, prodigal, reckless, and worthless sons, hopelessly dissipated, and rendered imbecile by self-indulgence and wasteful revels; or those people who discuss the expediency and apparent state necessity for the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, when the welfare of a great kingdom was set against the ties of blood.

After the death of Alexis, a few more years are given to the Czar to follow out his improvements,

centralize his throne, and extend his territories both on the Baltic and in the East. The death of Charles XII. enabled him to take what Swedish provinces he needed to protect his mercantile interests, and to snatch from Persia the southern coast of the Caspian, — the original kingdom of Cyrus. "It is not land I want," said he, "but water." This is the key to all his conquests. He wanted an outlet to the sea, on both sides his empire. He did not aim at territorial enlargement so much as at facilities to enrich and civilize his empire.

Having done his work, — the work, I think, for which he was raised up, — he sets about the succession to his throne. Amid unprecedented pomp he celebrates the coronation of his faithful and devoted wife, to whom he also has been faithful. It is she only who understands and can carry out his imperial policy. He himself at Moscow, 1724, amid unusual solemnities, placed the imperial crown upon her brow, and proudly and yet humbly walked before her in the gorgeous procession as a captain of her guard. Before all the great dignitaries of his empire he gives the following reasons for his course: —

"The Empress Catherine, our dearest consort, was an important help to us in all our dangers, not in war alone, but in other expeditions in which she voluntarily accompanied us; serving us with her able counsel, notwithstanding the

natural weakness of her sex, more particularly at the battle of Pruth, when our army was reduced to twenty-two thousand men, while the Turks were two hundred thousand strong. It was in this desperate condition, above all others, that she signalized her zeal by a courage superior to her sex. For which reasons, and in virtue of that power which God has given us, we thus honor our spouse with the imperial crown."

Peter died in the following year, after a reign of more than forty years, bequeathing a centralized empire to his successors, a large and disciplined army, a respectable navy, and many improvements in agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and the arts, — yea, schools and universities for the education of the higher classes.

Whatever may have been the faults of Peter, history cannot accuse him of ingratitude, or insincerity, or weak affections, — nothing of which is seen in his treatment of the honest Dutchman, in whose yard he worked as a common laborer; of Lefort, whom he made admiral of his fleet; or of Mentchikof, whom he elevated to the second place in his empire. Peter was not a great warrior, but he created armies. He had traits in common with barbarians, but he bequeathed a new civilization, and dispelled the night of hereditary darkness. He owed nothing to art; he looms up as a prodigy of Nature. He cared nothing for public opinion; he left the moral influence of a

great example. He began with no particular aim except to join his country to the sea; he bequeathed a policy of indefinite expansion. He did not leave free institutions, for his country was not prepared for them; but he animated thirty millions with an intense and religious loyalty. He did not emancipate serfs; but he bequeathed a power which enabled his successors to loosen fetters with safety. He degraded nobles; but his nobles would have prevented if they could the emancipation of the people. He may have wasted his energies in condescending to mean details, and insisting on doing everything with his own hands, from drummer to general, and cabin-boy to admiral, winning battles with his own sword, and singing in the choir as head of the Church; but in so doing he made the mistake of Charlemagne, whom he strikingly resembles in his iron will, his herculean energies, and his enlightened mind. He could not convert his subjects from cattle into men, even had he wished, for civilization is a long and tedious process; but he made them the subjects of a great empire, destined to spread from sea to sea. Certainly he was in advance of his people; he broke away from the ideas which enslaved them. He may have been despotic, and inexorable, and hard-hearted; but that was just such a man as his country needed for a ruler. Mr. Motley likens him to "a huge engine, placed upon the

earth to effect a certain task, working its mighty arms night and day with ceaseless and untiring energy, crashing through all obstacles, and annihilating everything in its path with the unfeeling precision of gigantic mechanism." I should say he was an instrument of Almighty power to bring good out of evil, and prepare the way for a civilization the higher elements of which he did not understand, and with which he would not probably have sympathized.

Who shall say, as we survey his mighty labors, and the indomitable energy and genius which inspired them, that he does not deserve the title which civilization has accorded to him, — yea, a higher title than that of Great, even that of Father of his country?

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FREDERIC THE GREAT.

A. D. 1712–1786.

THE PRUSSIAN POWER.

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THE history of Frederic the Great is simply that of a man who committed an outrageous crime, the consequences of which pursued him in the maledictions and hostilities of Europe, and who fought bravely and heroically to rescue himself and country from the ruin which impended over him as a consequence of this crime. His heroism, his fertility of resources, his unflagging energy, and his amazing genius in overcoming difficulties won for him the admiration of that class who idolize strength and success; so that he stands out in history as a struggling gladiator who baffled all his foes, — not a dying gladiator on the arena of a pagan amphitheatre, but more like a Judas Maccabæus, when hunted by the Syrian hosts, rising victorious, and laying the foundation of a powerful monarchy; indeed, his fame spread, irrespective of his cause and character, from one end of Christendom to the other, — not such a fame as endeared Gustavus Adolphus to the heart of

nations for heroic efforts to save the Protestant religion, — but such a fame as the successful generals of ancient Rome won by adding territories to a warlike State, regardless of all the principles of right and wrong. Such a career is suggestive of grand moral lessons; and it is to teach these lessons that I describe a character for whom I confess I feel but little sympathy, yet whom I am compelled to respect for his heroic qualities and great abilities.

Frederic of Prussia was born in 1712, and had an unhappy childhood and youth from the caprices of a royal but disagreeable father, best known for his tall regiment of guards; a severe, austere, prejudiced, formal, narrow, and hypochondriacal old Pharisee, whose sole redeeming excellence was an avowed belief in God Almighty and in the orthodox doctrines of the Protestant Church.

In 1740, this rigid, exacting, unsympathetic king died; and his son Frederic, who had been subjected to the severest discipline, restraints, annoyances, and humiliations, ascended the throne, and became the third King of Prussia, at the age of twenty-eight. His kingdom was a small one, being then about one quarter of its present size.

And here we pause for a moment to give a glance at the age in which he lived, — an age of great reactions, when the stirring themes and issues of the seventeenth

century were substituted for mockeries, levities, and infidelities; when no fierce protests were made except those of Voltaire against the Jesuits; when an abandoned woman ruled France, as the mistress of an enervated monarch; when Spain and Italy were sunk in lethargic forgetfulness, Austria was priest-ridden, and England was governed by a ring of selfish landed proprietors; when there was no marked enterprise but the slave-trade; when no department of literature or science was adorned by original genius; and when England had no broader statesman than Walpole, no abler churchman than Warburton, no greater poet than Pope. There was a general indifference to lofty speculation. A materialistic philosophy was in fashion,— not openly atheistic, but arrogant and pretentious, whose only power was in sarcasm and mockery, like the satires of Lucian, extinguishing faith, godless and yet boastful, — an Epicureanism such as Socrates attacked and Paul rebuked. It found its greatest exponent in Voltaire, the oracle and idol of intellectual Europe. In short, it was an age when general cynicism and reckless abandonment to pleasure marked the upper-classes; an age which produced Chesterfield, as godless a man as Voltaire himself.

In this period of religious infidelity, moral torpor, fashionable mediocrity, unthinking pleasure-seeking, and royal orgies; when the people were spurned, in-

sulted and burdened, — Frederic ascends an absolute throne. He is a young and fashionable philosopher. He professes to believe in nothing that ages of inquiry and study are supposed to have settled; he even ridicules the religious principles of his father. He ardently adopts everything which claims to be a novelty, but is not learned enough to know that what he supposes to be new has been exploded over and over again. He is liberal and tolerant, but does not see the logical sequence of the very opinions he indorses. He is also what is called an accomplished man, since he can play on an instrument, and amuse a dinner-party by jokes and stories. He builds a magnificent theatre, and collects statues, pictures, snuff-boxes, and old china. He welcomes to his court, not stern thinkers, but sneering and amusing philosophers. He employs in his service both Catholics and Protestants alike, since he holds in contempt the religion of both. He is free from animosities and friendships, and neither punishes those who are his enemies nor rewards those who are his friends. He apes reform, but shackles the press; he appoints able men in his service, but only those who will be his unscrupulous tools. He has a fine physique, and therefore is unceasingly active. He flies from one part of his kingdom to another, not to examine morals or education or the state of the people, but to inspect fortresses and to collect camps.

To such a man the development of the resources of his kingdom, the reform of abuses, and educational projects are of secondary importance; he gives his primary attention to raising and equipping armies, having in view the extension of his kingdom by aggressive and unjustifiable wars. He cares little for domestic joys or the society of women, and is incapable of sincere friendship. He has no true admiration for intellectual excellence, although he patronizes literary lions. He is incapable of any sacrifice except for his troops, who worship him, since their interests are identical with his own. In the camp or in the field he spends his time, amusing himself occasionally with the society of philosophers as cynical as himself. He has dreams and visions of military glory, which to him is the highest and greatest on this earth, Charles XII. being his model of a hero.

With such views he enters upon a memorable career. His first important public act as king is the seizure of part of the territory of the Bishop of Liège, which he claims as belonging to Prussia. The old bishop is indignant and amazed, but is obliged to submit to a robbery which disgusts Christendom, but is not of sufficient consequence to set it in a blaze.

The next thing he does, of historical importance, is to seize Silesia, a province which belongs to Austria, and contains about twenty thousand square miles, — a fertile and beautiful province, nearly as large as his

own kingdom; it is the highest table-land of Germany, girt around with mountains, hard to attack and easy to defend. So rapid and secret are his movements, that this unsuspecting and undefended country is overrun by his veteran soldiers as easily as Louis XIV. overran Flanders and Holland, and with no better excuse than the French king had. This outrage was an open insult to Europe, as well as a great wrong to Maria Theresa, — supposed by him to be a feeble woman who could not resent the injury. But in this woman he found the great enemy of his life, — a lioness deprived of her whelps, whose wailing was so piteous and so savage that she aroused Europe from lethargy, and made coalitions which shook it to its centre. At first she simply rallied her own troops, and fought single-handed to recover her lost and most valued province. But Frederic, with marvellous celerity and ability, got possession of the Silesian fortresses; the bloody battle of Mollwitz (1741) secured his prey, and he returned in triumph to his capital, to abide the issue of events.

It is not easy to determine whether this atrocious crime, which astonished Europe, was the result of his early passion for military glory, or the inauguration of a policy of aggression and aggrandizement. But it was the signal of an explosion of European politics which ended in one of the most bloody wars of modern

times. "It was," says Carlyle, "the little stone broken loose from the mountain, hitting others, big and little, which again hit others with their leaping and rolling, till the whole mountain-side was in motion under law of gravity."

Maria Theresa appeals to her Hungarian nobles, with her infant in her arms, at a diet of the nation, and sends her envoys to every friendly court. She offers her unscrupulous enemy the Duchy of Limberg and two hundred thousand pounds to relinquish his grasp on Silesia. It is like the offer of Darius to Alexander, and is spurned by the Prussian robber. It is not Limberg he wants, nor money, but Silesia, which he resolves to keep because he wants it, and at any hazard, even were he to jeopardize his own hereditary dominions. The peace of Breslau gives him a temporary leisure, and he takes the waters of Aachen, and discusses philosophy. He is uneasy, but jubilant, for he has nearly doubled the territory and population of Prussia. His subjects proclaim him a hero, with immense pæans. Doubtless, too, he now desires peace, — just as Louis XIV. did after he had conquered Holland, and as Napoleon did when he had seated his brothers on the old thrones of Europe.

But there can be no lasting peace after such outrageous wickedness. The angered kings and princes of Europe are to become the instruments of eternal

justice. They listen to the eloquent cries of the Austrian Empress, and prepare for war, to punish the audacious robber who disturbs the peace of the world and insults all other nationalities. But they are not yet ready for effective war; the storm does not at once break out.

The Austrians however will not wait, and the second Silesian war ensues, in which Saxony joins Austria. Again is Frederic successful, over the combined forces of these two powers, and he retains his stolen province. He is now regarded as a world-hero, for he has fought bravely against vastly superior forces, and is received in Berlin with unbounded enthusiasm. He renews his studies in philosophy, courts literary celebrities, reorganizes his army, and collects forces for a renewed encounter, which he foresees.

He has ten years of repose and preparation, during which he is lauded and flattered, yet retaining simplicity of habits, sleeping but five hours a day, finding time for state dinners, flute-playing, and operas, of all which he is fond; for he was doubtless a man of culture, social, well read if not profound, witty, inquiring, and without any striking defects save tyranny, ambition, parsimony, dissimulation, and lying.

It was during those ten years of rest and military preparation that Voltaire made his memorable visit — his third and last — to Potsdam and Berlin, thirty-two

From the painting by W. Camphausen

FREDERIC THE GREAT

months of alternate triumph and humiliation. No literary man ever had so successful and brilliant a career as this fortunate and lauded Frenchman, — the oracle of all salons, the arbiter of literary fashions, a dictator in the realm of letters, with amazing fecundity of genius directed into all fields of labor; poet, historian, dramatist, and philosopher; writing books enough to load a cart, and all of them admired and extolled, all of them scattered over Europe, read by all nations; a marvellous worker, of unbounded wit and unexampled popularity, whose greatest literary merit was in the transcendent excellence of his style, for which chiefly he is immortal; a great artist, rather than an original and profound genius whose ideas form the basis of civilizations. The King of Prussia formed an ardent friendship for this king of letters, based on admiration rather than respect; invited him to his court, extolled and honored him, and lavished on him all that he could bestow, outside of political distinction. But no worldly friendship could stand such a test as both were subjected to, since they at last comprehended each other's character and designs. Voltaire perceived the tyranny, the ambition, the heartlessness, the egotism, and the exactions of his royal patron, and despised him while he flattered him; and Frederic on his part saw the hollowness, the meanness, the suspicion, the irritability, the pride, the insincerity, the tricks, the

ingratitude, the baseness, the lies of his distinguished guest, — and their friendship ended in utter vanity. What friendship can last without mutual respect? The friendship of Frederic and Voltaire was hopelessly broken, in spite of the remembrance of mutual admiration and happy hours. It was patched up and mended like a broken vase, but it could not be restored. How sad, how mournful, how humiliating is a broken friendship or an alienated love! It is the falling away of the foundations of the soul, the disappearance forever of what is most to be prized on earth, — its celestial certitudes. A beloved friend may die, but we are consoled in view of the fact that the friendship may be continued in heaven: the friend is not lost to us. But when a friendship or a love is broken, there is no continuance of it through eternity. It is the gloomiest thing to think of in this whole world.

But Frederic was too busy and pre-occupied a man to mourn long for a departed joy. He was absorbed in preparations for war. The sword of Damocles was suspended over his head, and he knew it better than any other man in Europe; he knew it from his spies and emissaries. Though he had enjoyed ten years' peace, he knew that peace was only a truce; that the nations were arming in behalf of the injured empress; that so great a crime as the seizure of Silesia must be visited with a penalty; that there was no escape for

him except in a tremendous life-and-death struggle, which was to be the trial of his life; that defeat was more than probable, since the forces in preparation against him were overwhelming. The curses of the civilized world still pursued him, and in his retreat at Sans-Souci he had no rest; and hence he became irritable and suspicious. The clouds of the political atmosphere were filled with thunderbolts, ready to fall upon him and crush him at any moment; indeed, nothing could arrest the long-gathering storm.

It broke out with unprecedented fury in the spring of 1756. Austria, Russia, Sweden, Saxony, and France were combined to ruin him, — the most powerful coalition of the European powers seen since the Thirty Years' War. His only ally was England, — an ally not so much to succor him as to humble France, and hence her aid was timid and incompetent.

Thus began the famous Seven Years' War, during which France lost her colonial possessions, and was signally humiliated at home, — a war which developed the genius of the elder Pitt, and placed England in the proud position of mistress of the ocean; a war marked by the largest array of forces which Europe had seen since the times of Charles V., in which six hundred thousand men were marshalled under different leaders and nations, to crush a man who had insulted Europe and defied the law of nations and the laws of God. The

coalition represented one hundred millions of people with inexhaustible resources.

Now, it was the memorable resistance of Frederic II. to this vast array of forces, and his successful retention of the province he had seized, which gave him his chief claim as a hero; and it was his patience, his fortitude, his energy, his fertility of resources, and the enthusiasm with which he inspired his troops even after the most discouraging and demoralizing defeats, that won for him that universal admiration as a man which he lived to secure in spite of all his defects and crimes. We admire the resources and dexterity of an outlawed bandit, but we should remember he is a bandit still; and we confound all the laws which hold society together, when we cover up the iniquity of a great crime by the successes which have apparently baffled justice. Frederic II., by stealing Silesia, and thus provoking a great war of untold and indescribable miseries, is entitled to anything but admiration, whatever may have been his military genius; and I am amazed that so great a man as Carlyle, with all his hatred of shams, and his clear perceptions of justice and truth, should have whitewashed such a robber. I cannot conceive how the severest critic of the age should have spent the best years of his life in apologies for so bad a man, if his own philosophy had not become radically unsound, based on the abominable doctrine that the end justifies

the means, and that an outward success is the test of right. Far different was Carlyle's treatment of Cromwell. Frederic had no such cause as Cromwell; it was simply his own or his country's aggrandizement by any means, or by any sword he could lay hold of. The chief merit of Carlyle's history is his impartiality and accuracy in describing the details of the contest: the cause of the contest he does not sufficiently reprobate; and all his sympathies seem to be with the unscrupulous robber who fights heroically, rather than with indignant Europe outraged by his crimes. But we cannot separate crime from its consequences; and all the reverses, the sorrows, the perils, the hardships, the humiliations, the immense losses, the dreadful calamities through which Prussia had to pass, which wrung even the heart of Frederic with anguish, were only a merited retribution. The Seven Years' War was a king-hunt, in which all the forces of the surrounding monarchies gathered around the doomed man, making his circle smaller and smaller, and which would certainly have ended in his utter ruin, had he not been rescued by events as unexpected as they were unparalleled. Had some great and powerful foe been converted suddenly into a friend at a critical moment, Napoleon, another unscrupulous robber, might not have been defeated at Waterloo, or died on a rock in the ocean. But Providence, it would seem, who rules the fate of war, had some inscrutable reason

for the rescue of Prussia under Frederic, and the humiliation of France under Napoleon.

The brunt of the war fell of course upon Austria, so that, as the two nations were equally German, it had many of the melancholy aspects of a civil war. But Austria was Catholic and Prussia was Protestant; and had Austria succeeded, Germany possibly to-day would have been united under an irresistible Catholic imperialism, and there would have been no German empire whose capital is Berlin. The Austrians, in this contest, fought bravely and ably, under Prince Carl and Marshal Daun, who were no mean competitors with the King of Prussia for military laurels. But the Austrians fought on the offensive, and the Prussians on the defensive. The former were obliged to manœuvre on the circumference, the latter in the centre of the circle. The Austrians, in order to recover Silesia, were compelled to cross high mountains whose passes were guarded by Prussian soldiers. The war began in offensive operations, and ended in defensive.

The most terrible enemy that Frederic had, next to Austria, was Russia, ruled then by Elizabeth, who had the deepest sympathy with Maria Theresa; but when she died, affairs took a new turn. Frederic was then on the very verge of ruin, — was, as they say, about to be "bagged," — when the new Emperor of Russia conceived a great personal admiration for his genius and

heroism; the Russian enmity was converted to friendship, and the Czar became an ally instead of a foe.

The aid which the Saxons gave to Maria Theresa availed but little. The population, chiefly and traditionally Protestant, probably sympathized with Prussia more than with Austria, although the Elector himself was Catholic, — that inglorious monarch who resembled in his gallantries Louis XV., and in his dilettante tastes Leo X. He is chiefly known for the number of his concubines and his Dresden gallery of pictures.

The aid which the French gave was really imposing, so far as numbers make efficient armies. But the French were not the warlike people in the reign of Louis XV. that they were under Henry IV., or Napoleon Bonaparte. They fought, without the stimulus of national enthusiasm, without a cause, as part of a great machine. They never have been successful in war without the inspiration of a beloved cause. This war had no especial attraction or motive for them. What was it to Frenchmen, so absorbed with themselves, whether a Hohenzollern or a Hapsburg reigned in Germany? Hence, the great armies which the government of France sent to the aid of Maria Theresa were without spirit, and were not even marshalled by able generals. In fact, the French seemed more intent on crippling England than in crushing Frederic. The war

had immense complications. Though France and England were drawn into it, yet both France and England fought more against each other than for the parties who had summoned them to their rescue.

England was Frederic's ally, but her aid was not great directly. She did not furnish him with many troops; she sent subsidies instead, which enabled him to continue the contest. But these were not as great as he expected, or had reason to expect. With all the money he received from Walpole or Pitt he was reduced to the most desperate straits.

One thing was remarkable in that long war of seven years, which strained every nerve and taxed every energy of Prussia: it was carried on by Frederic in hard cash. He did not run in debt; he always had enough on hand in coin to pay for all expenses. But then his subjects were most severely taxed, and the soldiers were poorly paid. If the same economy he used in that war of seven years had been exercised by our Government in its late war, we should not have had any national debt at all at the close of the war, although we probably should have suspended specie payments.

It would not be easy or interesting to attempt to compress the details of a long war of seven years in a single lecture. The records of war have great uniformity, — devastation, taxes, suffering, loss of life and

of property (except by the speculators and government agents), the flight of literature, general demoralization, the lowering of the tone of moral feeling, the ascendency of unscrupulous men, the exaltation of military talents, general grief at the loss of friends, fiendish exultation over victories alternated with depressing despondency in view of defeats, the impoverishment of a nation on the whole, and the sickening conviction, which fastens on the mind after the first excitement is over, of a great waste of life and property for which there is no return, and which sometimes a whole generation cannot restore. Nothing is so dearly purchased as the laurels of the battlefield; nothing is so great a delusion and folly as military glory to the eye of a Christian or philosopher. It is purchased by the tears and blood of millions, and is rebuked by all that is grand in human progress. Only degraded and demoralized peoples can ever rejoice in war; and when it is not undertaken for a great necessity, it fills the world with bitter imprecations. It is cruel and hard and unjust in its nature, and utterly antagonistic to civilization. Its greater evils are indeed overruled; Satan is ever rebuked and baffled by a benevolent Providence. But war is always a curse and a calamity in its immediate results, — and in its ultimate results also, unless waged in defence of some immortal cause.

It must be confessed, war is terribly exciting. The

eyes of the civilized world were concentrated on Frederic II. during this memorable period; and most people anticipated his overthrow. They read everywhere of his marchings and counter-marchings, his sieges and battles, his hair-breadth escapes, and his renewed exertions, from the occupation of Saxony to the battle of Torgau. In this war he was sometimes beaten, as at Kolin; but he gained three memorable victories, — one over the French, at Rossbach; the second, over the Austrians, at Luthen; and the third, over the Russians, at Zorndorf, the most bloody of all his battles. And he gained these victories by outflanking, his attack being the form of a wedge, — learned by the example of Epaminondas, — a device which led to new tactics, and proclaimed Frederic a master of the art of war. But in these battles he simply showed himself to be a great general. It was not until his reverses came that he showed himself a great man, or earned the sympathy which Europe felt for a humiliated monarch, putting forth herculean energies to save his crown and kingdom. His easy and great victories in the first year of the war simply saved him from annihilation; they were not great enough to secure peace. Although thus far he was a conqueror, he had no peace, no rest, and but little hope. His enemies were so numerous and powerful that they could send large reinforcements: he could draw but few. In time it was apparent that he would

be destroyed, whatever his skill and bravery. Had not the Empress Elizabeth died, he would have been conquered and prostrated. After his defeat at Hochkirch, he was obliged to dispute his ground inch by inch, compelled to hide his grief from his soldiers, financially straitened and utterly forlorn; but for a timely subsidy from England he would have been desperate. The fatal battle of Kunnersdorf, in his fourth campaign, when he lost twenty thousand men, almost drove him to despair; and evil fortune continued to pursue him in his fifth campaign, in which he lost some of his strongest fortresses, and Silesia was opened to his enemies. At one time he had only six days' provisions: the world marvelled how he held out. Then England deserted him. He made incredible exertions to avert his doom: everlasting marches, incessant perils; no comforts or luxuries as a king, only sorrows, privations, sufferings; enduring more labors than his soldiers; with restless anxieties and blasted hopes. In his despair and humiliation it is said he recognized God Almighty. In his chastisements and misfortunes, — apparently on the very brink of destruction, and with the piercing cries of misery which reached his ears from every corner of his dominions, — he must, at least, have recognized a Retribution. Still his indomitable will remained. His pride and his self-reliance never deserted him; he would have died rather than have yielded up Silesia until

wrested from him. At last the battle of Torgau, fought in the night, and the death of the Empress of Russia, removed the overhanging clouds, and he was enabled to contend with Austria unassisted by France and Russia. But if Maria Theresa could not recover Silesia, aided by the great monarchies of Europe, what could she do without their aid? So peace came at last, when all parties were wearied and exhausted; and Frederic retained his stolen province at the sacrifice of one hundred and eighty thousand men, and the decline of one tenth of the whole population of his kingdom and its complete impoverishment, from which it did not recover for nearly one hundred years. Prussia, though a powerful military state, became and remained one of the poorest countries of Europe; and I can remember when it was rare to see there, except in the houses of the rich, either a silver fork or a silver spoon; to say nothing of the cheap and frugal fare of the great mass of the people, and their comfortless kind of life, with hardly any physical luxuries except tobacco and beer. It is surprising how, in a poor country, Frederic could have sustained such an exhaustive war without incurring a national debt. Perhaps it was not as easy in those times for kings and states to run into debt as it is now. One of the great refinements of advancing civilization is that we are permitted to bequeath our burdens to future generations. Time only will

show whether this is the wisest course. It is certainly not a wise thing for individuals to do. He who enters on the possession of a heavily mortgaged estate is an embarrassed, perhaps impoverished, man. Frederic, at least, did not leave debts for posterity to pay; he preferred to pay as he went along, whatever were the difficulties.

The real gainer by the war, if gainer there was, was England, since she was enabled to establish a maritime supremacy, and develop her manufacturing and mercantile resources, — much needed in her future struggles to resist Napoleon. She also gained colonial possessions, a foothold in India, and the possession of Canada. This war entangled Europe, and led to great battles, not in Germany merely, but around the world. It was during this war, when France and England were antagonistic forces, that the military genius of Washington was first developed in America. The victories of Clive and Hastings soon after followed in India.

The greatest loser in this war was France: she lost provinces and military prestige. The war brought to light the decrepitude of the Bourbon rule. The marshals of France, with superior forces, were disgracefully defeated. The war plunged France in debt, only to be paid by a "roaring conflagration of anarchies." The logical sequence of the war was in those discontents and taxes which prepared the way for the French

Revolution, — a catastrophe or a new birth, as men differently view it.

The effect of the war on Austria was a loss of prestige, the beginning of the dismemberment of the empire, and the revelation of internal weakness. Though Maria Theresa gained general sympathy, and won great glory by her vigorous government and the heroism of her troops, she was a great loser. Besides the loss of men and money, Austria ceased to be the great threatening power of Europe. From this war England, until the close of the career of Napoleon, was really the most powerful state in Europe, and became the proudest.

As for Prussia, — the principal transgressor and actor, — it is more difficult to see the actual results. The immediate effects of the war were national impoverishment, an immense loss of life, and a fearful demoralization. The limits of the kingdom were enlarged, and its military and political power was established. It became one of the leading states of Continental Europe, surpassed only by Austria, Russia, and France. It led to great standing armies and a desire of aggrandizement. It made the army the centre of all power and the basis of social prestige. It made Frederic II. the great military hero of that age, and perpetuated his policy in Prussia. Bismarck is the sequel and sequence of Frederic. It was by aggressive and unscrupulous wars that the Romans were aggrandized, and it was also

by the habits and tastes which successful war created that Rome was ultimately undermined. The Roman empire did not last like the Chinese empire, although at one period it had more glory and prestige. So war both strengthens and impoverishes nations. But I believe that the violation of eternal principles of right ultimately brings a fearful penalty. It may be long delayed, but it will finally come, as in the sequel of the wicked wars of Louis XIV. and Napoleon Bonaparte. Victor Hugo, in his "History of a Great Crime," on the principle of everlasting justice, forewarned "Napoleon the Little" of his future reverses, while nations and kingdoms, in view of his marvellous successes, hailed him as a friend of civilization; and Hugo lived to see the fulfilment of his prophecy. Moreover, it may be urged that the Prussian people, — ground down by an absolute military despotism, the mere tools of an ambitious king, — were not responsible for the atrocious conquests of Frederic II. The misrule of monarchs does not bring permanent degradation on a nation, unless it shares the crimes of its monarch, — as in the case of the Romans, when the leading idea of the people was military conquest, from the very commencement of their state. The Prussians in the time of Frederic were a sincere, patriotic, and religious people. They were simply enslaved, and suffered the poverty and misery which were entailed by war.

After Frederic had escaped the perils of the Seven Years' War, it is surprising he should so soon have become a party to another atrocious crime, — the division and dismemberment of Poland. But here both Russia and Austria were also participants.

"Sarmatia fell, unwept, without a crime."

And I am still more amazed that Carlyle should cover up this crime with his sophistries. No man in ordinary life would be justified in seizing his neighbor's property because he was weak and his property was mismanaged. We might as well justify Russia in attempting to seize Turkey, although such a crime may be overruled in the future good of Europe. But Carlyle is an Englishman; and the English seized and conquered India because they wanted it, not because they had a right to it. The same laws which bind individuals also binds kings and nations. Free nations from the obligations which bind individuals, and the world would be an anarchy. Grant that Poland was not fit for self-government, this does not justify its political annihilation. The heart of the world exclaimed against that crime at the time, and the injuries of that unfortunate state are not yet forgotten. Carlyle says the "partition of Poland was an operation of Almighty Providence and the eternal laws of Nature," — a key to his whole philosophy, which means,

if it means anything, that as great fishes swallow up the small ones, and wild beasts prey upon each other, and eagles and vultures devour other birds, it is all right for powerful nations to absorb the weak ones, as the Romans did. Might does not make right by the eternal decrees of God Almighty, written in the Bible and on the consciences of mankind. Politicians, whose primal law is expediency, may justify such acts as public robbery, for they are political Jesuits, — always were, always will be; and even calm statesmen, looking on the overruling of events, may palliate; but to enlightened Christians there is only one law, "Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you." Nor can Christian civilization reach an exalted plane until it is in harmony with the eternal laws of God. Mr. Carlyle glibly speaks of Almighty Providence favoring robbery; here he utters a falsehood, and I do not hesitate to say it, great as is his authority. God says, "Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not covet anything which is thy neighbor's, . . . for he is a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation." We must set aside the whole authority of divine revelation, to justify any crime openly or secretly committed. The prosperity of nations, in the long run, is based on righteousness: not on injustice, cruelty, and selfishness.

It cannot be denied that Frederic well managed his stolen property. He was a man of ability, of enlightened views, of indefatigable industry, and of an iron will. I would as soon deny that Cromwell did not well govern the kingdom which he had seized, on the plea of revolutionary necessity and the welfare of England, for he also was able and wise. But what was the fruit of Cromwell's well-intended usurpation? — a hideous reaction, the return of the Stuarts, the dissipation of his visionary dreams. And if the states which Frederic seized, and the empire he had founded in blood and carnage had been as well prepared for liberty as England was, the consequences of his ambition might have been far different.

But Frederic did not so much aim at the development of national resources, — the aim of all immortal statesmen, — as at the growth and establishment of a military power. He filled his kingdom and provinces with fortresses and camps and standing armies. He cemented a military monarchy. As a wise executive ruler, the King of Prussia enforced law and order, was economical in his expenditures, and kept up a rigid discipline; even rewarded merit, and was friendly to learning. And he showed many interesting personal qualities, — for I do not wish to make him out a monster, only as a great man who did wicked things, and things which even cemented for the time the power

of Prussia. He was frugal and unostentatious. Like Charlemagne, he associated with learned men. He loved music and literature; and he showed an amazing fortitude and patience in adversity, which called out universal admiration. He had a great insight into shams, was rarely imposed upon, and was scrupulous and honest in his dealings as an individual. He was also a fascinating man when he unbent; was affable, intelligent, accessible, and unstilted. He was an admirable talker, and a tolerable author. He always sympathized with intellectual excellence. He surrounded himself with great men in all departments. He had good taste and a severe dignity, and despised vulgar people; had no craving for fast horses, and held no intercourse with hostlers and gamblers, even if these gamblers had the respectable name of brokers. He punished all public thieves; so that his administration at least was dignified and respectable, and secured the respect of Europe and the admiration of men of ability. The great warrior was also a great statesman, and never made himself ridiculous, never degraded his position and powers, and could admire and detect a man of genius, even when hidden from the world. He was a Tiberius, but not a Nero fiddling over national calamities, and surrounding himself with stage-players, buffoons, and idiots.

But here his virtues ended. He was cold, selfish,

dissembling, hard-hearted, ungrateful, ambitious, unscrupulous, without faith in either God or man; so sceptical in religion that he was almost an atheist. He was a disobedient son, a heartless husband, a capricious friend, and a selfish self-idolater. While he was the friend of literary men, he patronized those who were infidel in their creed. He was not a religious persecutor, because he regarded all religions as equally false and equally useful. He was social among convivial and learned friends, but cared little for women or female society. His latter years, though dignified and quiet, an idol in all military circles, with an immense fame, and surrounded with every pleasure and luxury at Sans-Souci, were still sad and gloomy, like those of most great men whose leading principle of life was vanity and egotism, — like those of Solomon, Charles V., and Louis XIV. He heard the distant rumblings, if he did not live to see the lurid fires, of the French Revolution. He had been deceived in Voltaire, but he could not mistake the logical sequence of the ideas of Rousseau, — those blasting ideas which would sweep away all feudal institutions and all irresponsible tyrannies. When Mirabeau visited him he was a quaking, suspicious, irritable, capricious, unhappy old man, though adored by his soldiers to the last, — for those were the only people he ever loved, those who were willing to die for him, those who built up

his throne: and when he died, I suppose he was sincerely lamented by his army and his generals and his nobility, for with him began the greatness of Prussia as a military power. So far as a life devoted to the military and political aggrandizement of a country makes a man a patriot, Frederic the Great will receive the plaudits of those men who worship success, and who forget the enormity of unscrupulous crimes in the outward glory which immediately resulted, — yea, possibly of contemplative statesmen who see in the rise of a new power an instrument of the Almighty for some inscrutable end. To me his character and deeds have no fascination, any more than the fortunate career of some one of our modern millionnaires would have to one who took no interest in finance. It was doubtless grateful to the dying King of Prussia to hear the plaudits of his idolaters, as he stood on the hither shores of eternity; but his view of the spectators as they lined those shores must have been soon lost sight of, and their cheering and triumphant voices unheard and disregarded, as the bark, in which he sailed alone, put forth on the unknown ocean, to meet the Eternal Judge of the living and the dead.

We leave now the man who won so great a fame, to consider briefly his influence. In two respects, it seems to me, it has been decided and impressive.

In the first place, he gave an impulse to rationalistic inquiries in Germany; and many there are who think this was a good thing. He made it fashionable to be cynical and doubtful. Being ashamed of his own language, and preferring the French, he encouraged the current and popular French literature, which in his day, under the guidance of Voltaire, was materialistic and deistical. He embraced a philosophy which looked to secondary rather than primal causes, which scouted any revelations that could not be explained by reason, or reconciled with scientific theories, — that false philosophy which intoxicated Franklin and Jefferson as well as Hume and Gibbon, and which finally culminated in Diderot and D'Alembert; the philosophy which became fashionable in German universities, and whose nearest approach was that of the exploded Epicureanism of the Ancients. Under the patronage of the infidel court, the universities of Germany became filled with rationalistic professors, and the pulpits with dead and formal divines; so that the glorious old Lutheranism of Prussia became the coldest and most lifeless of all the forms which Protestantism ever assumed. Doubtless, great critics and scholars arose under the stimulus of that unbounded religious speculation which the King encouraged; but they employed their learning in pulling down rather than supporting the pillars of the ancient orthodoxy. And so rapidly did rationalism

spread in Northern Germany, that it changed its great lights into *illuminati*, who spurned what was revealed unless it was in accordance with their speculations and sweeping criticism. I need not dwell on this undisguised and blazing fact, on the rationalism which became the fashion in Germany, and which spread so disastrously over other countries, penetrating even into the inmost sanctuaries of theological instruction. All this may be progress; but to my mind it tended to extinguish the light of faith, and fill the seats of learning with cynics and unbelieving critics. It was bad enough to destroy the bodies of men in a heartless war; it was worse to nourish those principles which poisoned the soul, and spread doubt and disguised infidelities among the learned classes.

But the influence of Frederic was seen in a more marked manner in the inauguration of a national policy directed chiefly to military aggrandizement. If there ever was a purely military monarchy, it is Prussia; and this kingdom has been to Europe what Sparta was to Greece. All the successors of Frederic have followed out his policy with singular tenacity. All their habits and associations have been military. The army has been the centre of their pride, ambition, and hope. They have made their country one vast military camp. They have exempted no classes from military services; they have honored and exalted the army more than

any other interest. The principal people of the land are generals. The resources of the kingdom are expended in standing armies; and these are a perpetual menace. A network of military machinery controls all other pursuits and interests. The peasant is a military slave. The student of the university can be summoned to a military camp. Precedence in rank is given to military men over merchant princes, over learned professors, over distinguished jurists. The genius of the nation has been directed to the perfection of military discipline and military weapons. The government is always prepared for war, and has been rarely averse to it. It has ever been ready to seize a province or pick a quarrel. The late war with France was as much the fault of Prussia as of the government of Napoleon. The great idea of Prussia is military aggrandizement; it is no longer a small kingdom, but a great empire, more powerful than either Austria or France. It believes in new annexations, until all Germany shall be united under a Prussian Kaiser. What Rome became, Prussia aspires to be. The spirit, the animus, of Prussia is military power. Travel in that kingdom, — everywhere are soldiers, military schools, camps, arsenals, fortresses, reviews. And this military spirit, evident during the last hundred years, has made the military classes arrogant, austere, mechanical, contemptuous. This spirit pervades the nation. It despises

other nations as much as France did in the last century, or England after the wars of Napoleon.

But the great peculiarity of this military spirit is seen in the large standing armies, which dry up the resources of the nation and make war a perpetual necessity, at least a perpetual fear. It may be urged that these armies are necessary to the protection of the state, — that if they were disbanded, then France, or some other power, would arise and avenge their injuries, and cripple a state so potent to do evil. It may be so; but still the evils generated by these armies must be fatal to liberty, and antagonistic to those peaceful energies which produce the highest civilization. They are fatal to the peaceful virtues. The great Schiller has said: —

> "There exists
> An higher than the warrior's excellence.
> Great deeds of violence, adventures wild,
> And wonders of the moment, — these are not they
> Which generate the high, the blissful,
> And the enduring majesty.

I do not disdain the virtues which are developed by war; but great virtues are seldom developed by war, unless the war is stimulated by love of liberty or the conservation of immortal privileges worth more than the fortunes or the lives of men. A nation incapable of being roused in great necessities soon becomes in-

significant and degenerate, like Greece when it was incorporated with the Roman empire; but I have no admiration of a nation perpetually arming and perpetually seeking political aggrandizement, when the great ends of civilization are lost sight of. And this is what Frederic sought, and his successors who cherished his ideas. The legacy he bequeathed to the world was not emancipating ideas, but the policy of military aggrandizement. And yet, has civilization no higher aim than the imitation of the ancient Romans? Can nations progressively become strong by ignoring the spirit of Christianity? Is a nation only to thrive by adopting the sentiments peculiar to robbers and bandits? I know that Prussia has not neglected education, or science, or industrial energy; but these have been made subservient to military aims. The highest civilization is that which best develops the virtues of the heart and the energies of the mind: on these the strength of man is based. It may be necessary for Prussia, in the complicated relations of governments, and in view of possible dangers, to sustain vast standing armies; but the larger these are, the more do they provoke other nations to do the same, and to eat out the vitals of national wealth. That nation is the greatest which seeks to reduce, rather than augment, forces which prey upon its resources and which are a perpetual menace. And hence the vast standing armies which conquerors

seek to maintain are not an aid to civilization, but on the other hand tend to destroy it; unless by civilization and national prosperity are meant an ever-expanding policy of military aggrandizement, by which weaker and unoffending states may be gradually absorbed by irresistible despotism, like that of the Romans, whose final and logical development proves fatal to all other nationalities and liberties, — yea, to literature and art and science and industry, the extinction of which is the moral death of an empire, however grand and however boastful, only to be succeeded by new creations, through the fires of successive wars and hateful anarchies.

In one point, and one alone, I see the Providence which permitted the military aggrandizement to which Frederic and his successors aimed; and that is, in furnishing a barrier to the future conquests of a more barbarous people, — I mean the Russians; even as the conquests of Charlemagne presented a barrier to the future irruptions of barbarous tribes on his northern frontier. Russia — that rude, demoralized, Slavonic empire — cannot conquer Europe until it has first destroyed the political and military power of Germany. United and patriotic, Germany can keep at present the Russians at bay, and direct the stream of invasion to the East rather than the south; so that Europe will not become either Cossack or French, as Napoleon predicted. In this light the military genius and power of

Germany, which Frederic did so much to develop, may be designed for the protection of European civilization and the Protestant religion.

But I will not speculate on the aims of Providence, or the evil to be overruled for good. With my limited vision, I can only present facts and their immediate consequences. I can only deduce the moral truths which are logically to be drawn from a career of wicked ambition. These truths are a part of that moral wisdom which experience confirms, and which alone should be the guiding lesson to all statesmen and all empires. Let us pursue the right, and leave the consequences to Him who rules the fate of war, and guides the nations to the promised period when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and universal peace shall herald the reign of the Saviour of the world.

AUTHORITIES.

The great work of Carlyle on the Life of Frederic, which exhausts the subject; Macaulay's Essay on the Life and Times of Frederic the Great; Carlyle's Essay on Frederic; Lord Brougham on Frederic; Coxe's History of the House of Austria; Mirabeau's Histoire Secrète de la Cour de Berlin; Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand; Ranke's Neue Bücher Preussischer Geschichte; Pöllnitz's Memoirs and Letters; Walpole's Reminiscences; Letters of Voltaire; Voltaire's Idée du Roi de Prusse; Life of Baron Trenck; Gillies View of the Reign of Frederic II.; Thiebault's Mémoires de Frédéric le Grand; Biographie Universelle; Thronbesteigung; Holden.

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